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Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Summary record of the 1st meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 23 April 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Bugajski ..... (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Chair** declared open the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was being convened pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/68 of 11 December 2015.

2. The international security environment was at least as fragile as it had been during the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference, with no decrease in regional conflicts, instability or tensions between some States parties. Indeed, positions were at times more polarized and several outstanding issues remained. Nonetheless, there had recently been promising developments. Moreover, throughout its almost 50 years of existence, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons had been the centrepiece of the non-proliferation regime, not only dissuading a number of States parties from acquiring nuclear weapons but also surviving the Cold War and the lack of tangible outcomes to four review conferences. Although the Non-Proliferation Treaty was not perfect, it united States parties in their efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, it was an indispensable reference framework for organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, and one without which effective disarmament, non-proliferation and advancement of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy would be unthinkable. The legacy of the Treaty should motivate the States parties, whose primary collective responsibility was to uphold the credibility and integrity of the Treaty and strengthen its effectiveness and implementation, in their discussions.

3. He urged the States parties to communicate in a respectful and receptive manner, to focus on common ground and practical solutions, and to engage in fair, focused and results-oriented discussions that would establish solid building blocks for the next session of the Preparatory Committee and the 2020 Review Conference. He particularly encouraged the active involvement of female participants, which would enrich the debate.

Statement by the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs

4. **Ms. Nakamitsu** (High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs) said that the disarmament agenda currently being developed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations was aimed at re-energizing the international discourse by offering new perspectives on the traditional agenda and identifying areas in which more coherent and collaborative efforts within the United Nations system could better support Member States' disarmament obligations. The Secretary-General was exploring how he could use his moral authority to support shared norms against the use, testing and proliferation of nuclear weapons. His intention to facilitate resumed dialogue on strategic arms control and disarmament, and to promote practical measures to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, was based on the conviction that human and security considerations were not mutually exclusive and should underpin and lend urgency to the international community's efforts.

5. Almost 50 years since the Non-Proliferation Treaty had opened for signature, it had transcended its initial purpose to become the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and an essential tool in achieving nuclear disarmament. Almost universal adherence to the Treaty, and the fact that it represented a legally binding commitment to disarmament and verifiable non-proliferation safeguards, formed the basis for its status as one of the most successful and credible multilateral security instruments. It was vital not to take that success and credibility for granted.

6. The international community now faced challenges similar to those that had led to the establishment of the Treaty. The growing threat of the use of nuclear weapons, which concerned all humanity, would remain as long as such weapons continued to exist. The geopolitical environment was deteriorating. Some of the most important instruments and agreements on collective security were being eroded and rhetoric about the necessity and utility of nuclear weapons was on the rise. Moreover, modernization programmes implemented by nuclear-weapon States were leading to what many saw as a new qualitative arms race. The recent hiatus in negotiations among the major powers on arms control and disarmament created real concerns that unless the trend was reversed there would soon be no verified constraints on nuclear arsenals.

7. Yet there were reasons for hope. The Secretary-General had welcomed recent developments on the Korean Peninsula, including the recommitment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to denuclearization, the establishment of an inter-Korean hotline and other steps taken to improve inter-Korean relations. It was hoped that the decision by that country to suspend nuclear tests and launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles and to dismantle its nuclear test site would build trust and foster an environment enabling

sincere dialogue. The Secretary-General anticipated the positive outcome of the upcoming inter-Korean summit and hoped for early agreement on a framework for resumed negotiation leading to verifiable denuclearization and sustainable peace on the Korean Peninsula. Meanwhile, the Secretary-General remained convinced that the joint comprehensive plan of action was the best means of ensuring the exclusively peaceful nature of the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran and tangible economic benefits for the Iranian people. She hoped that all participants remained fully committed to the plan's implementation and long-term preservation.

8. In order to achieve the current session's primary goal of preparing the ground for the success of the 2020 Review Conference, States parties must return to the common path that had been painstakingly built over the previous five decades. It was important to remember that efforts to sustain the Treaty and produce a successful review cycle were undertaken because a strong and credible Treaty was vital for enhancing the international community's collective security.

9. In conclusion, she hoped that the debate would be conducted constructively and in the spirit of common purpose. She urged States parties to act with alacrity given that 2020 was only two years away and a successful outcome required immediate action. The nuclear-weapon States had a responsibility to lead nuclear disarmament efforts, but all States parties were responsible for taking the necessary measures to ensure the full implementation and future health of the Treaty.

Adoption of the agenda (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.I/15 and NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/INF/3/Rev.1)

10. **The Chair** recalled that the agenda for all three sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference had been adopted at the first session in 2017 and was set out in document NPT/CONF.2020/PC.I/15.

11. Drawing attention to the indicative timetable for the current session (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/INF/3/Rev.1), he took it that the Committee wished to take note of that timetable and to structure its work accordingly.

12. *It was so decided.*

Organization of work of the Preparatory Committee (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/CRP.1)

(a) Election of officers

13. The Chair said that, in accordance with previous practice, the sessional Chairs served as Vice-Chairs of the Committee during sessions when they were not serving as Chair. In that regard, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries had nominated Mr. Yaakob of Malaysia to serve as the Chair of the third session of the Preparatory Committee. He took it that the Committee wished to elect Mr. Yaakob as the Chair of the third session.

14. *It was so decided.*

15. **The Chair** informed the Committee that Mr. van der Kwast, Chair of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference, had resigned and would be succeeded by Mr. Gabriëlse, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament and Disarmament Ambassador-at-large, as a member of the bureau of the Preparatory Committee.

(b) Dates and venues for further sessions

16. **The Chair** said that, following consultations and based on information provided by the Secretariat, the proposed dates for the third session of the Preparatory Committee, to be held in New York, were 29 April to 10 May 2019. Those dates took into account the provisional calendar of meetings of the United Nations disarmament bodies. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to hold its third session on those dates.

17. *It was so decided.*

(c) Methods of work

(i) Decision-making

18. **The Chair** suggested that, in accordance with past practice, the Committee should adopt the following decision: "The Committee decides to make every effort to adopt its decisions by consensus. In the event that consensus could not be reached, the Committee could then take decisions in accordance with the rules of procedure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which would be applied mutatis mutandis."

19. *It was so decided.*

(ii) Participation

20. **The Chair** suggested that, with regard to the participation of entities other than States parties in the sessions of the Preparatory Committee, the Committee should adopt the following decision, based on the practice of the previous preparatory committees, the relevant rules of procedure of the 2015 Review Conference and the agreement at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference:

"1. Representatives of States not parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons should be allowed, upon request, to attend as observers the meetings of the Committee other than those designated closed meetings, to be seated in the Committee behind their countries' nameplates and to receive documents of the Committee. They should also be entitled to submit documents to the participants in the Committee.

"2. Representatives of specialized agencies and international and regional intergovernmental organizations should be allowed, upon request, to attend as observers the meetings of the Committee other than those designated closed meetings, to be seated in the Committee behind their organizations' nameplates and to receive documents of the Committee. They should also be entitled to submit, in writing, their views and comments on questions within their competence, which may be circulated as documents of the Committee. Furthermore, the Committee decides, based on the agreement at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which would be applied mutatis mutandis, that specialized agencies and international and regional intergovernmental organizations should be invited to make oral presentations to the Committee upon the decision of the Committee on a case-by-case basis.

"3. Representatives of non-governmental organizations should be allowed, upon request, to attend the meetings of the Committee other than those designated closed, to be seated in the designated area, to receive documents of the Committee and, at their own expense, to make written material available to the participants in the Committee. The Committee shall also allocate a meeting to non-governmental organizations to address each session of the Committee."

21. *It was so decided.*

22. **The Chair** informed the Committee that no States had requested to attend the session as observers.

23. The following specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations and entities had requested to attend the session of the Preparatory Committee: the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, the European Union, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the League of Arab States, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research; in addition, the 66 non-governmental organizations listed in document NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/INF/5/Rev.1 had submitted requests to attend. He took it that the Committee wished to take note of those requests.

24. *It was so decided.*

(iii) Working languages

25. **The Chair** said he took it that the Committee wished to continue its past practice of using Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish as its working languages.

26. *It was so decided.*

(iv) Records and documents

27. **The Chair** noted that during the previous sessions of the Preparatory Committee, summary records had been provided, at each session, for the Committee's opening meeting, the general debate and the closing meeting. In addition, records had been kept of the decisions taken at other meetings. He took it that the Committee wished to proceed accordingly at the current session.

28. *It was so decided.*

Organization of the 2020 Review Conference
(NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/CRP.1)

(a) Dates and venue

29. **The Chair** said that, following consultations and based on information provided by the Secretariat, the proposed dates for the 2020 Review Conference, to be held in New York, were 27 April to 22 May 2020. Those dates took into account the provisional calendar of meetings of the United Nations disarmament bodies. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to hold the 2020 Review Conference on those dates.

30. *It was so decided.*

(f) Financing of the Review Conference, including its Preparatory Committee
(NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/1)

31. **The Chair** drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 3 of document NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/1, which, inter alia, indicated that costs associated with the preparation and holding of the 2020 Review Conference

and the sessions of its Preparatory Committee would be borne by the States parties to the Treaty and that there would be no financial implications for the regular budget of the United Nations. Those activities would be undertaken by the Secretariat only after sufficient funding was received, in advance. In that regard, he noted that the production of official documentation in all six languages was one of the most expensive budget items and a major factor contributing to high costs. The cooperation of delegations in that respect was therefore much appreciated.

General debate on issues related to all aspects of the work of the Preparatory Committee

32. **Mr. Cichocki** (Poland) said that, as his country prepared to assume the presidency of the United Nations Security Council, and as a non-permanent member of the Council, it had prioritized support for and the promotion of existing international law, and was especially devoted to maintaining the primacy of a rules-based order. Since its entry into force, the Non-Proliferation Treaty had stood at the heart of the global regime for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It had continuously fostered international efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and facilitate access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Poland remained committed to strengthening each of the Treaty's mutually reinforcing pillars; non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy were complementary goals that should be pursued together, systematically and with equal determination.

33. Despite current geopolitical challenges, including the rapid development by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its nuclear programme, the uncertain future of the joint comprehensive plan of action, the lack of progress in relation to the holding of a conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and increasing divisions with respect to the terms and pace of nuclear disarmament, the Treaty continued to be an essential part of the modern security system and the ultimate point of reference for non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament initiatives.

34. The current review cycle was an opportunity to reaffirm the integrity and viability of the Treaty, and States parties should make full use of all opportunities to review its implementation. The sessions of the Preparatory Committee played a role not only in paving the way for a productive review conference but also in affording opportunities to present ideas and overcome differences.

35. The only way to achieve the global vision of a world without nuclear weapons was through effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament. That would be possible only if all States worked in unison in the belief that doing so strengthened their security. Poland therefore supported a progressive approach to nuclear disarmament.

36. Poland was committed to strengthening existing organizations, such as IAEA, and would work to bring about the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (fissile material cut-off treaty). Moreover, it was working to establish a robust and credible verification regime of concrete nuclear disarmament measures, as demonstrated by its participation in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, the Group of Governmental Experts on Verification in All its Aspects, including the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Verification, and in the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group.

37. Given the threat posed by non-State actors seeking weapons of mass destruction and related material and technology, Poland was committed to attaining the highest level of nuclear security within the framework of IAEA. It had been actively involved in the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and its chairmanship of the regular meetings of the subscribing States to the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (Hague Code of Conduct) for the period 2017–2018 demonstrated its concern with regard to the connection between the proliferation of missiles and nuclear technologies. Poland also valued the role of export control regimes as complementary tools in curbing proliferation, and supported the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards system, which was a fundamental component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and played a vital role in the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

38. His country continued to support the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The Ministry of Energy was updating its plan to implement a nuclear power programme aimed at diversifying electricity generation infrastructure, ensuring a secure energy supply and reducing the environmental impact of non-renewable energy. Poland pledged full transparency with regard to its future activities in the area of nuclear energy. It had also hosted several IAEA missions to ensure that Polish nuclear infrastructure complied with all international standards and best practices.

39. As the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force approached, it was important to restore a spirit of trust and cooperation to ensure that the Treaty produced tangible results. All States parties should take a proactive, constructive and flexible approach to ensure the success of the current session.

40. **Mr. Feruta** (Chief Coordinator, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)) said that the transfer of nuclear technology to developing countries was one of the most important areas of the Agency's work, as such technology helped countries to, inter alia, reduce poverty, generate electricity, manage water resources, treat diseases and respond to climate change. IAEA focused on transferring knowledge and expertise through high-quality technical training, thus enabling countries to train future generations of nuclear specialists. Furthermore, IAEA helped to increase food supplies by using nuclear techniques to develop new varieties of higher-yield, more resistant crops. IAEA also assisted developing countries in fighting cancer through the provision of technical support, equipment and training to health-care professionals.

41. Excellent progress was being made with regard to the modernization of the Agency's eight nuclear applications laboratories near Vienna. The laboratories trained scientists, supported research in areas such as human health and food, and provided analytical services to national laboratories. A new insect pest control laboratory had been inaugurated in September 2017 and a flexible modular laboratory building would be opened in November 2018. In addition, a new linear accelerator facility, which would become operational in the Agency's Dosimetry Laboratory in the second half of 2018, would significantly enhance the assistance the Agency provided to countries in the safe and effective use of radiotherapy.

42. The IAEA Peaceful Uses Initiative, launched in 2010, provided additional funds for the Agency's technical cooperation activities and had helped to raise over 120 million euros for more than 260 projects that benefited around 150 countries. He was grateful to all countries for their support in that respect.

43. Nuclear power could help address the twin challenges of ensuring reliable energy supplies and curbing greenhouse gas emissions; indeed, nuclear power generated almost one third of low-carbon electricity worldwide. There were currently 450 nuclear power reactors in operation in 30 countries and another 30 countries, the majority of them developing nations, were considering or had begun constructing their first reactors. If countries decided to use nuclear power, IAEA helped them to do so safely, securely and sustainably. The IAEA Scientific Forum 2018, to be held in September, formed part of the Agency's efforts to raise awareness of the important role played by nuclear technology in mitigating climate change and its consequences. Work continued on the establishment of the IAEA Low Enriched Uranium Bank in Kazakhstan, and transit agreements between IAEA and the Russian Federation and between IAEA and China had entered into force. One of the most important IAEA events of 2018 would be the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology, which would take place in Vienna from 28 to 30 November 2018.

44. While nuclear safety and security were the responsibility of member States, IAEA played a central role in ensuring effective international cooperation in those areas. Lessons from the Fukushima Daiichi accident had been incorporated into all IAEA nuclear safety requirements, ensuring that they would become part of global safety practice. Safety culture must continue to be strengthened. In September 2017, the IAEA Board of Governors had adopted the Nuclear Security Plan 2018-2021, and IAEA would continue its work as the global platform for strengthening nuclear security.

45. Demands on the Agency in the field of nuclear verification were growing steadily owing to the additional quantities of nuclear material that were being made subject to safeguards. A total of 182 States had safeguards agreements in force, while 132 States had brought additional protocols into force. States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty that had not yet implemented comprehensive safeguards agreements or concluded additional protocols should do so without delay.

46. IAEA had been monitoring and verifying the implementation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of its nuclear-related commitments under the joint comprehensive plan of action. The country's implementation of its additional protocol had significantly improved access to locations and information. IAEA inspectors now spent a combined total of approximately 3,000 days a year in the field, which was twice as many as in 2013. They had taken hundreds of environmental samples and placed around 2,000 tamper-proof seals on nuclear material and equipment. Furthermore, thousands of images were captured daily by the Agency's surveillance cameras, and several million pieces of open-source information were collected and analysed each month. The Islamic Republic of Iran was thus subject to the world's most robust nuclear verification regime.

47. The nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remained a major cause for concern. Despite the fact that IAEA inspectors had left the country in 2009, the Agency had continued to collect and evaluate information, including by monitoring satellite imagery. It remained ready to resume verification activities when political developments made that possible. The Agency called on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply fully with its obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions and to resolve all outstanding issues, including those that had arisen since 2009.

48. There had been no major developments concerning the implementation by the Syrian Arab Republic of its safeguards agreement over the past year. IAEA continued to urge that country to cooperate with it fully in connection with all unresolved issues.

49. The Agency made an important contribution to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. Its safeguards activities, through which it aimed to provide credible assurances about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities, were a valuable international confidence-building measure. Furthermore, IAEA supported the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which already covered vast regions of the world.

50. **Mr. Zerbo** (Executive Secretary, Preparatory Committee for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization) said that in the face of frequently voiced concerns that current rising tensions and uncertainty were the result of ineffectiveness of the instruments, approaches and mechanisms used to date to combat weapons of mass destruction, it was important to focus on what brought real security: negotiated agreements that were verifiable and credibly enforceable. In that spirit, he welcomed news that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was considering suspending nuclear tests and dismantling its test site as part of a possible negotiated agreement. The Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty could play an important role in that process, providing the necessary security and certainty by formalizing the country's commitment to cease nuclear testing. Adherence to the Treaty, which was founded on a robust verification system, was the only way to overcome the lack of trust that was impeding progress on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. In that regard, his Organization was ready to assist in any way possible.

51. The Committee had two years to prepare the ground for an outcome to the 2020 Review Conference that proved to the world that nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament could be achieved within a clear, rules-based framework. In an ever-changing political landscape, the Non-Proliferation Treaty was an immovable foundation for a future of peace and security. Those who had created the Treaty in the 1960s had foreseen that the nuclear age would require a set of diplomatic and normative tools to prevent humanitarian and environmental destruction, and had demonstrated resolve in striking a long-lasting "grand bargain" to deliver peace and security. If the Treaty was under strain, it was not because the instrument itself was fatally flawed, but because there had been insufficient efforts to maintain and secure its entire chain of responsibilities, of which the entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was an essential part. That Treaty had been an integral part of the decision made in 1995 to extend the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It provided the international community with a non-discriminatory, verifiable and legally-binding means of ensuring that no nuclear test explosion, or any other nuclear explosion, could take place. The world now had at its disposal the most extensive global monitoring system ever seen. Hundreds of detection facilities in over 90 countries were currently gathering and transmitting data to the state-of-the-art International Data Centre in Vienna. Accurate and reliable data on every nuclear test that had been conducted in the twenty-first century was shared with States signatories to the Test-Ban Treaty well within strict timelines.

52. Nonetheless, the unfortunate reality was that despite 183 signatories and 166 ratifications, more than two decades had passed since the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had opened for signature and more than six since a nuclear test ban had first been mooted. The benefits provided for under that Treaty could be permanently secured only through its entry into force, which was the most practical, achievable and effective disarmament measure available to the international community given that the verification regime established by the Treaty was already in operation and there was a de facto global moratorium on nuclear tests. Moreover, action on the Treaty would provide the impetus for the progress needed during the Non-Proliferation Treaty review cycle.

53. All States had the responsibility to pass on to future generations hard-won gains such as the two treaties. The challenge was not to rethink the value of the Treaty or of the multilateral approach, but, rather, to put the Treaty back on track. Diplomacy, supported by rigorous, science-based verification tools, remained the key to real security. It was essential to preserve the integrity of the Treaty across all of its pillars and to identify all possible means of making progress towards the international community's shared goals.

54. **Mr. Valero** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of States parties belonging to the Non-Aligned Movement, said that nuclear disarmament was the highest priority for the Group, which remained extremely concerned by the threat to humanity posed by the existence of nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation were mutually reinforcing and essential for strengthening international peace and security. It was counterproductive and unsustainable to pursue non-proliferation while ignoring nuclear disarmament obligations. Proliferation concerns were best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. He therefore welcomed multilateral efforts towards nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and noted with satisfaction the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 7 July 2017 at the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. The negotiation and conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, containing a phased programme for the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame, were urgently needed.

55. The Group stressed that reductions in deployments and in operational status were no substitute for the irreversible and total elimination of nuclear weapons. It also reaffirmed the importance of the application by the nuclear-weapon States of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability in all measures related to the fulfilment of their nuclear disarmament obligations. Full compliance by the nuclear-weapon States with their undertakings was imperative and would enhance confidence in the non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

56. The indefinite extension of the Treaty did not imply the indefinite possession of nuclear arsenals. Any such assumption was incompatible with the object and purpose of the Treaty. The continued existence of nuclear weapons, and the military doctrines of the nuclear-weapon States and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization that set out rationales for the use or threat of use of such weapons, posed the greatest threat to peace and security. Such doctrines could not be justified on any grounds. The Group noted with grave concern the current intensive investment by nuclear-weapon States in the modernization of their nuclear forces and the development of newer, more effective low-yield nuclear warheads. The increased role of those inhumane weapons in military doctrines lowered the threshold for their actual use. The Group therefore urged the nuclear-weapon States to end the new nuclear arms race and to comply with their legal obligations and unequivocal undertakings to eliminate all their nuclear weapons without further delay, and called upon all States parties to comply with their legal obligations under article VI of the Treaty.

57. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the Group called for the early commencement of negotiations on effective, universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory, irrevocable and legally binding security assurances by all nuclear-weapon States with regard to the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as a matter of high priority. Despite long-standing requests by non-nuclear-weapon States to receive such legally binding universal assurances, no tangible progress had been achieved in that respect. The Group called for reaffirmation by the Review Conference that any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would be a crime against humanity and a violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

58. Non-proliferation policies should not undermine the inalienable rights of States to acquire, access, import or export nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes. States also had an inalienable right to research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination, and to participate as fully as possible in the exchange of equipment, material and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

59. IAEA was the sole competent authority for the verification of compliance by its member States with the obligations established under their respective safeguards agreements with the Agency, and was mandated under its statute to further global disarmament through safeguards. The Group was confident of the Agency's impartiality and professionalism, and strongly rejected any attempts by States to politicize or interfere with its work.

60. The Group underlined the importance of universal adherence to the Treaty, and called on all States that were not parties to accede as non-nuclear-weapon States without delay and to place all their nuclear facilities and activities under IAEA comprehensive safeguards. All States parties should make every effort to achieve the universality of the Treaty and refrain from taking any action that could jeopardize that objective. Strict observance of comprehensive IAEA safeguards and adherence to the Treaty were preconditions for any cooperation in the area of nuclear energy.

61. The Group regretted the failure of the ninth Review Conference to reach consensus on a final document despite the efforts made by members of the Non-Aligned Movement. That failure should motivate

States parties to work harder to achieve nuclear disarmament. Given that the upcoming Review Conference coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force, every effort should be made by States to avoid another such failure. That was largely dependent on the demonstration by the nuclear-weapon States of genuine political will and flexibility.

62. The Group reaffirmed its support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and underlined the importance of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. In that regard, it reiterated its serious concern over the protracted delay in the implementation of that resolution and called for its full implementation without further delay. Pending the establishment of such a zone, Israel must renounce any nuclear weapons it might possess, accede to the Treaty without preconditions or further delay and promptly place its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards. The nuclear capability of Israel posed a serious and continuing threat to the security of neighbouring and other States. The Group condemned Israel for continuing to develop and stockpile nuclear arsenals and called for a total prohibition on transfers to Israel of any nuclear-related equipment, information, material, facilities, resources or devices, and on assistance in nuclear-related scientific or technological fields.

63. The Group was ready to engage with its partners constructively in order to achieve a successful outcome to the 2020 review process and ensure a peaceful and secure world for present and future generations.

64. **Mr. Bylica** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the Non-Proliferation Treaty was the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and an important element in the future development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes.

65. The Treaty had retained its value over the past 50 years, despite ever-changing circumstances, and had continued to make a fundamental contribution to global security. The European Union was committed to upholding the Treaty as a key multilateral instrument, to promoting its universality and to enhancing its implementation. States that had not yet done so should join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States, and all States parties should fulfil their obligations under the Treaty and the commitments they had undertaken during previous review conferences. With those objectives in mind and in the spirit of cooperation, the European Union would actively participate in the ongoing review process, and continued to promote comprehensive, balanced and full implementation of the action plan contained in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference, which remained valid.

66. The European Union contributed actively to global efforts to achieve security and a safer world for all and to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons in accordance with the goals of the Treaty, and in so doing promoted international stability. In that context, the European Union called for further progress on all aspects of disarmament to enhance global security.

67. All parties should contribute to improving the strategic context for arms control and disarmament and avoid eroding the rules-based multilateral system. They must endeavour to decrease international tensions, restore dialogue and trust and move from confrontation to cooperation in order to solve global security challenges and regional conflicts. All proliferation crises must be addressed resolutely. Given the current severe security environment, all States concerned should take appropriate and practical risk reduction measures, as outlined in the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, to ensure the safety and security of their nuclear arsenals.

68. The European Union remained committed to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty. Concrete progress was needed in respect of the full implementation of that article, especially through an overall reduction in the global stockpile of nuclear weapons while taking into account the special responsibility of the States that possessed the largest nuclear arsenals. In that regard, the European Union urged the United States of America and the Russian Federation to extend the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty) and to seek further reductions in their strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons. The European Union encouraged further initiatives on confidence-building, transparency, verification activities and reporting, and welcomed the concrete actions taken by the two European nuclear-weapon States in that respect. In particular, it called for the preservation of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles

(Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty), which was vital for the security of Europe.

69. The European Union called on all States that had not yet done so to sign and ratify the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without further delay. Promotion of the universalization and entry into force of that Treaty, which made an important contribution to international peace and security, remained a top priority. The European Union continued to provide significant financial support to the verification regime established under the Treaty. Pending the Treaty's entry into force, all States should uphold their moratoriums on nuclear-weapon-test explosions and any other nuclear explosions, and refrain from any action that would defeat the object and purpose of the Treaty.

70. The European Union remained committed to verifiable, treaty-based nuclear disarmament and arms control, and underlined the need to renew multilateral efforts and revitalize multilateral negotiating bodies. It called for the immediate negotiation, by the Conference on Disarmament, of a fissile material cut-off treaty, and in that regard looked forward to the recommendations of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group. In the meantime, all States possessing nuclear weapons that had not yet done so should declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

71. The European Union supported the ongoing work on nuclear disarmament verification with the aim of developing appropriate multilateral technical capabilities. It welcomed the establishment of the group of governmental experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament and looked forward to further work in other forums, such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

72. Negative security assurances strengthened the nuclear non-proliferation regime. He therefore called on all nuclear-weapon States to reaffirm their existing security assurances, in line with relevant Security Council resolutions. As recommended by the 2010 Review Conference, the Conference on Disarmament should begin discussions with a view to elaborating recommendations on all aspects of the issue, without excluding the possibility of an international legally binding instrument.

73. The European Union remained gravely concerned about the nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which posed a serious threat to international peace and security and the global non-proliferation regime. While ongoing diplomatic efforts to achieve a peaceful solution were timely and appreciated, it would be encouraging if the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fulfilled its recent commitments regarding testing. The international community must continue to exert maximum pressure on the country, including through the full and effective implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions, until it embarked on a credible path towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. The European Union urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with its international obligations under multiple Security Council resolutions, to sign and ratify the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and to return to compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its comprehensive safeguards agreement. It was the firm stance of the European Union that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea could not have the status of a nuclear-weapon State under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

74. The European Union reaffirmed its commitment to the joint comprehensive plan of action, which illustrated that it was possible to find peaceful and diplomatic solutions to even the most pressing proliferation challenges, and expected all parties to continue to implement the plan in full. It was in the common interest to preserve a deal that strengthened the global non-proliferation regime, contributed to regional and international peace and security and provided the necessary assurances with respect to the exclusively peaceful nature of the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The European Union called on the Islamic Republic of Iran to promptly ratify an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement with IAEA and to refrain from ballistic missile launches, which were inconsistent with Security Council resolution 2231 (2015).

75. The continued non-compliance by the Syrian Arab Republic with its safeguards agreement was deeply regrettable. The European Union therefore once again urged that country to resolve all outstanding issues in full cooperation with IAEA and to conclude an additional protocol with the Agency as soon as possible. The European Union condemned in the strongest terms any use of chemical weapons and the deliberate targeting of civilians in the Syrian Arab Republic, which were further violations of the country's non-proliferation obligations in relation to weapons of mass destruction. The international community must end impunity for such war crimes.

76. The European Union reaffirmed its strong commitment to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. It considered the 1995

resolution valid until its goals and objectives had been achieved, and strongly supported the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference relating to the Middle East. It was deeply regrettable that a conference on the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East had not been convened. All States in the region must urgently and proactively engage with the organizers and each other with the aim of enabling the conference to be convened as soon as possible, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at between those States. The European Union had continuously expressed its readiness to assist in the process, and had organized seminars in 2011 and 2012 and a capacity-building workshop in 2014 to help foster a conducive atmosphere and move the process forward. It continued to call on all States in the region that had not yet done so to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention), and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

77. The IAEA safeguards system was a fundamental component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and played an indispensable role in the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Comprehensive safeguards agreements, together with additional protocols, constituted the current verification standard. The Model Additional Protocol to the Agreements between States and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards should be universalized without delay.

78. The European Union also attached the utmost importance to effective export controls and supported the work of multilateral export control regimes. It urged all States to adhere to the relevant guidelines as well as to the Hague Code of Conduct. All States Members of the United Nations had a legal obligation to prevent the acquisition by States and non-State actors of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, as required by Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and subsequent resolutions on the matter.

79. The European Union recognized the right of States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with article IV of the Treaty. It was in their common interest to ensure that nuclear energy was developed and used responsibly, under the most rigorous safety, security, safeguards and non-proliferation conditions.

80. The European Union continued to promote the highest standards of nuclear safety and security in Europe and worldwide, and urged all States to accede to the relevant international treaties. While nuclear safety and security remained a matter of national competence, strengthening nuclear security and safety through international cooperation was of the utmost importance. The international community must work together to prevent accidents and incidents, including trafficking in and terrorist access to nuclear or radiological materials. The safety and security of radioactive sources must be improved worldwide. IAEA played a central role in fostering strong nuclear security and safety cultures.

81. The European Union strongly supported the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme in all areas of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which contributed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and called on all countries to contribute to the IAEA Technical Cooperation Fund.

82. Gender equality and the empowerment of women were priorities for the European Union, and the women and peace and security agenda continued to feature prominently in European Union external action. Women must be fully involved, through active and equal participation, in non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. The European Union also supported the further engagement of civil society and academia in addressing and discussing challenges related to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

83. **Mr. Ford** (United States of America) said that the current session provided the States parties with an opportunity to reflect on their shared interest in maintaining the Non-Proliferation Treaty, their shared responsibility for strengthening the non-proliferation regime and the central role of non-proliferation in achieving the full benefits of the Treaty, particularly the security benefits it provided to all States parties. An effective non-proliferation regime was key to building security conditions conducive to further progress on nuclear disarmament, and facilitated cooperation in respect of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy by building confidence that peaceful nuclear programmes would not be misused.

84. However, the non-proliferation regime currently faced serious threats, including the immediate challenge posed by the development of nuclear weaponry and delivery systems by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in violation of both the Non-Proliferation Treaty and multiple Security Council resolutions. The Islamic Republic of Iran also posed a longer-term challenge, having unlawfully and secretly sought to develop nuclear weapons and having continued to

enrich uranium in violation of Security Council resolutions, thus retaining the ability to produce such weapons rapidly. Furthermore, there was continued resistance by some States to the strengthening of nuclear safeguards, including through the implementation of additional protocols to States' comprehensive safeguards agreements with IAEA.

85. Nuclear disarmament must be addressed in the context of the overall security environment. Deteriorating security conditions, including the actions of States that were expanding and modernizing their nuclear stockpiles, threatening their neighbours or violating their arms control obligations meant that the short-term prospects for further progress on disarmament were bleak. Moreover, the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and the recent chemical weapons attack in Salisbury, United Kingdom, had had a deleterious impact on collective security. Such transgressions of international law against the use of weapons of mass destruction should be of great concern to all, yet the response of the disarmament community to date had been regrettably weak. He therefore urged all States parties to engage in constructive discourse on how to facilitate further progress on nuclear disarmament, keeping in mind that the easing of international tension and the strengthening of trust between States would help to create the conditions necessary for such progress.

86. Despite the challenges faced, it was important not to forget the progress made in establishing and maintaining the non-proliferation regime. Since the Non-Proliferation Treaty had opened for signature, only a handful of additional States had acquired nuclear weapons, a number of countries had renounced efforts to acquire such weapons, nuclear war had become significantly less likely and geopolitical stability had largely been maintained. Nuclear safeguards had been preserved and were now being strengthened through adherence to additional protocols to IAEA safeguards agreements. Nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike had benefited from the implementation of articles I and II of the Treaty, which protected the security of all States parties by providing assurances against the development and acquisition by their neighbours and rivals of nuclear weapons, and by helping to forestall the addition of a destabilizing nuclear dimension to conflict-prone regions of the world.

87. Furthermore, under the New START Treaty, the strategic nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Russian Federation had been limited to levels not seen since the 1950s, and the United States stockpile was only some 12 per cent the size of its Cold War peak.

88. The non-proliferation regime had also proven effective as a foundation for a successful system whereby the benefits of nuclear science, which contributed to the health, nourishment, comfort and prosperity of all humankind, could be broadly shared. IAEA had been a focal point for that sharing, providing billions of dollars' worth of assistance to its member States in the use of nuclear energy and applications of nuclear science and technology for development. The United States had been the largest contributor to those efforts to promote peaceful nuclear activities, having provided not only significant financial contributions but also in-kind assistance to IAEA and its member States. For several decades, the United States had also been the largest supplier of nuclear power globally.

89. While the global non-proliferation regime had not prevented all proliferation, it had confounded experts' dire predictions of escalating proliferation, provided critical security benefits to all States parties and built a foundation for a global system of peaceful nuclear cooperation and development. If all States bore that in mind, they could surely find ways to work together to overcome current challenges and preserve those benefits in the future.

90. **Mr. Jato** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), said that the preparatory process for the 2020 Review Conference was taking place in a particularly challenging international security landscape: the international community was witnessing the use of weapons of mass destruction; nuclear weapons were gaining more prominence in security doctrines; the entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remained elusive; there was uncertainty regarding the future of the joint comprehensive plan of action; the prospects for progress on nuclear arms control were discouraging; and developments with respect to the nuclear and missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were alarming, despite recent events offering a glimmer of hope.

91. In that environment, States were responsible for working together to find common ground. The Nordic countries had learned that sustainable security could be achieved only through cooperation; accordingly, they cooperated closely on disarmament and non-proliferation affairs, notwithstanding their different security policy choices.

92. The lack of gender equality had hampered disarmament and non-proliferation efforts for too long. The pursuit of equal gender representation was not only a question of rights and fairness, but was also a matter of efficiency. Studies showed that diverse teams were

more effective and innovative and took more sustainable decisions. The inclusion and strengthening of gender perspectives could help to break the ongoing stalemate with respect to disarmament and non-proliferation.

93. The Nordic countries were united in their concern regarding the continued risk to humanity of the threat of the use of nuclear weapons. During the current review cycle, it was important to reaffirm the nuclear disarmament obligations of States parties pursuant to article VI of the Treaty and to promote risk reduction and transparency measures. He encouraged collective action to reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons and the risk of their accidental use. Non-nuclear-weapon States that were parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty had a legitimate interest in receiving legally binding negative security assurances from nuclear-weapon States. The Nordic countries were ready to engage in any effort to achieve that goal.

94. When nuclear weapons were being modernized and new delivery systems developed, the importance of a rules-based system became vital. The fact that the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty was under severe pressure was deeply concerning. He called on the United States and the Russian Federation to continue their efforts to address the serious concerns regarding the compliance of the Russian Federation with that treaty, to extend the New START Treaty and to seek further reductions in strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed warheads.

95. Effective monitoring, verification and compliance mechanisms were critical building blocks for achieving nuclear disarmament. The Nordic countries welcomed and were actively involved in various initiatives in that regard, including the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, which brought together nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States to develop the necessary capabilities for verifiably dismantling nuclear weapons, and the Quad Nuclear Verification Partnership, which deepened understanding of verification, not least in respect of how to manage the issue of information on proliferation. Progress on nuclear disarmament verification would be an important deliverable at the 2020 Review Conference.

96. The negotiation and conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty were a pressing need. Such a treaty could also provide for a phased approach to the elimination of existing stocks. In that regard, the Nordic countries fully supported the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group.

97. The Nordic countries also attached great importance to the establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons, and noted with regret the failure to convene a conference on the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East. Such zones provided an avenue for legally binding negative security assurances.

98. The Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had established a global standard to which all but one State adhered. The Nordic countries urged all States that had not yet done so to sign and ratify that treaty without further delay, and to refrain from any action that might undermine it.

99. The Nordic countries firmly condemned the nuclear and ballistic missile tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which constituted a flagrant violation of multiple Security Council resolutions and represented a serious challenge to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. That country must return to compliance with its Treaty obligations.

100. The Nordic countries fully supported the joint comprehensive plan of action, which demonstrated that consensus was possible even when the starting point for discussions was difficult, and encouraged all parties to comply with their commitments and obligations. They greatly valued the role of IAEA in monitoring and verifying the implementation of the plan of action, and had provided financial support for those activities. Sustained implementation of the plan was necessary to maintain and strengthen the global non-proliferation regime.

101. He underscored the importance of additional protocols to IAEA safeguards agreements in ensuring effective verification and thus the credibility of the non-proliferation regime and security for all.

102. Safety, security and safeguards were of crucial importance in enabling peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technologies, which went far beyond the generation of nuclear power to encompass numerous applications that could bring benefits to millions of people, and the Non-Proliferation Treaty played a central role in that respect.

103. The Nordic countries were actively contributing to several international initiatives to prevent nuclear terrorism, one of the most prominent of which was the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and was committed to continued efforts to enhance nuclear security.

104. The Non-Proliferation Treaty was a fundamental global pact that had served the international community well. Review conferences with no agreed outcome could not be allowed to become the norm given the challenges currently faced. It was essential to focus on common ground and shared objectives, to redouble efforts to

maintain and strengthen the relevance of the Treaty and to refrain from any action that might undermine it.

105. **Archbishop Jurkovič** (Observer for the Holy See) said that in the context of increasing international tensions and instability, international relations could not be held hostage to military force, mutual intimidation or the parading of arms stockpiles. As the 2020 Review Conference approached, the Holy See appealed to the shared wisdom and goodwill of humanity to reaffirm disarmament and non-proliferation as essential aspects of the international community's agenda. Weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, created a false sense of security. The tragic illusion of "peace" based on fear was superficial at best. People aspired to true peace, which was the opposite of fear. That desire could never be satisfied by military means alone, much less the possession of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

106. Non-proliferation and disarmament were not only ethical responsibilities but also mutually reinforcing and complementary moral and legal obligations towards every member of the human family. The continued existence of nuclear weapons contributed to a mentality of fear, violence and dominance. It was unfortunate that while other weapons of mass destruction were universally condemned, there was complacency over the continued possession and large-scale modernization of nuclear weapons.

107. In a united family of increasingly interdependent nations, national and international security interests were interconnected. Short-sighted approaches to national security and double standards had undermined unity and progress, undermining the original purpose spirit of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

108. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation were linked to integral human development. Poverty reduction strategies could not be pursued separately from disarmament and peace efforts. The arms race, and the modernization and development of nuclear arsenals, infrastructure and delivery systems, robbed the poor and disadvantaged of the resources needed to reduce poverty and foster human development. In November 2017, the Holy See had convened an international symposium on a world free of nuclear weapons, to explore and strengthen connections between integral disarmament and integral human development. At that symposium, Pope Francis had expressed concern over the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, as well as the risk of accidental detonation, condemning both the threat of use and the possession of such weapons.

109. The Holy See had ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which demonstrated the strength of humanity's desire for true peace. It was important to remember that the same moral imperatives and objectives underpinned both that treaty and the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In that regard, the two treaties mutually reinforced and complemented one another.

110. The illusion of safety in nuclear strength was contradicted by the dangerous and haunting realities of nuclear threats and proliferation. In order to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons through irreversible, verifiable and universal nuclear disarmament, it was vital to dispel fear and animosity.

111. **Mr. Wannamethee** (Thailand) said that, as the 2020 Review Conference and the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Non-Proliferation Treaty approached, it was important to take stock of what had been achieved and consider how to ensure continued success. States parties to the Treaty shared equal responsibility in the implementation of the Treaty and its three pillars, which should be addressed in a balanced manner.

112. The use of nuclear technology must be accompanied by assurances of its use for exclusively peaceful purposes, as stipulated in article IV of the Treaty. Thailand therefore welcomed strengthened safeguards, as well as increased transparency and confidence-building measures by nuclear-weapon States, to ensure progress in the nuclear weapon reduction and disarmament process pursuant to article III of the Treaty.

113. The adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was designed to complement the Non-Proliferation Treaty, reflected States parties' determination to fulfil article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in good faith. Thailand urged other States to engage in dialogue and decisions regarding its entry into force in a constructive manner.

114. As the depositary State of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, Thailand supported the establishment of more such zones worldwide. It therefore urged all parties concerned to support early discussions on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as stipulated in article VII and mandated by the 2010 Review Conference. Positive progress on that issue would be a significant achievement for the 2020 Review Conference.

115. The lack of progress in implementing the outcomes of previous review conferences and the failure of the 2015 Review Conference to produce an outcome

document highlighted the need for redoubled efforts to ensure a meaningful and credible 2020 Review Conference. Furthermore, as stakeholders in the process, actors from civil society, industry and academia must be allowed to play an active role in the pursuit of the disarmament agenda.

116. Thailand placed great value on its close relationship with IAEA and its engagement with other international agencies, and supported such cooperation efforts, which could further strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty and more effectively advance the goal of international peace and security.

117. The ever-changing security landscape was of concern to all. While he welcomed the renewed willingness of relevant stakeholders to enter into dialogue regarding the Korean Peninsula, nuclear weapons continued to pose a threat to the region. The Treaty must be relevant, forceful and dynamic in order to address that and similar threats.

118. There were clear connections between disarmament, peace and security, and development. The establishment of peace and security through disarmament and non-proliferation were requisites for the achievement of those of the Sustainable Development Goals to which the Treaty could contribute. Furthermore, the fact that peaceful applications of nuclear technology could, inter alia, improve food security, public health and water management and provide energy should inspire States to work harder to ensure the success of the Treaty. Accordingly, he hoped for substantive and fruitful deliberations at the current session and the constructive participation of all States parties.

119. **Mr. Muylle** (Belgium) said that in the face of a grave and increasingly complex security situation, tensions between certain nuclear-weapon States and limited progress on non-proliferation issues, it was difficult to believe that the current review process would lead to a meaningful outcome. Since the unsuccessful 2015 Review Conference, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had conducted three nuclear tests and launched numerous missiles. The nuclear deal with Iran was at risk of unravelling, and the previous year's negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons had highlighted the increased polarization of the non-proliferation community.

120. While progress was still possible despite those challenges, it could not be achieved unless States parties were willing to engage meaningfully in the review process, overcome divisions and take concrete action. In that regard, the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference was still a firm basis for progress in respect of all three pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Steps must be taken to reduce nuclear risks and prevent the unauthorized use of nuclear technologies, and nuclear weapons should be taken off high alert wherever possible.

121. Sustained political will was needed to establish international norms, which must be underpinned by legal instruments. The one country that continued to violate the international ban on nuclear tests was one exception too many. Moreover, voluntary moratoriums on nuclear testing did not ensure a permanent and fully verifiable legal norm; the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty must enter into force. All States should undertake the necessary political and legal steps to make adherence possible, because only full and unconditional adherence to the Treaty by all States would result in a world free of nuclear tests. However, the establishment of international norms was not in itself sufficient; those norms must be verified and non-compliance must be sanctioned. The Chemical Weapons Convention served as a grim reminder that even an almost universally accepted norm could be eroded when States parties refused to comply with their obligations thereunder.

122. Although most European States were not parties to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, they all benefited from the protection it offered. Continued compliance with the Treaty was therefore of critical importance. The Russian Federation should continue to engage in dialogue with the United States to address the concerns raised by its development of a new missile system. He hoped that the protection that Europe enjoyed against the threat of intermediate-range missiles could one day be extended to other continents.

123. The benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear technologies were manifold, ranging from energy production to pest control, food sterilization and cancer therapy. As a market leader in the production of medical radioisotopes, Belgium would continue to take any necessary measures to ensure their uninterrupted delivery to the millions of patients who relied on them for diagnosis and treatment.

124. The full range of peaceful nuclear applications should remain accessible to all States. However, those benefits should also entail responsibilities. IAEA should be able to use all measures at its disposal to control States' nuclear programmes and detect any possible diversion of nuclear materials to weapons programmes. That required comprehensive safeguards agreements coupled with additional protocols. The possibility that the application of such standards might represent a burden on States could not be cited as a justification for rejection of such comprehensive guarantees of the peaceful nature of their nuclear programmes.

125. **Ms. Higgie** (New Zealand), speaking on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, said that the current year marked the twentieth anniversary of the Coalition, which had been established to respond to the continued threat posed by nuclear weapons and the urgent need to fulfil the obligation enshrined in article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The risk of nuclear weapon detonation continued to grow, posing a threat to all peoples. As highlighted by the Secretary-General, global concerns about nuclear weapons were at their most acute since the Cold War. Now, more than ever, was the time for States parties to demonstrate their commitment to the Treaty by implementing it.

126. The nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments of States parties, as established in article VI of the Treaty and subsequently elaborated in the Treaty's review conference outcomes, were clear. The consensus agreements reached at previous review conferences, particularly the package of decisions and resolutions of 1995, the thirteen steps and the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, were binding commitments and represented common ground on which all States parties had agreed.

127. Throughout each review cycle and in the annual General Assembly resolution on the matter, the New Agenda Coalition had consistently called for the accelerated implementation of States parties' nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments. Those included the de-alerting of nuclear weapons, the entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a fissile material cut-off treaty, transparency measures, nuclear disarmament verification, the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, particularly in the Middle East, and the entry into force of the legally binding protocols to existing treaties establishing such zones, as well as the review of any related reservations. No meaningful progress had been made with respect to any of those obligations or commitments, despite the fact that many of them had been reaffirmed on a number of occasions. It was not the time to reinterpret them, to abandon or delay their implementation or to make their fulfilment conditional on the false notion of an improved global security environment. Doubts as to the intention of nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their disarmament obligations would weaken the Treaty, undermine the credibility of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and even make other States parties unwilling to fulfil their own obligations under the Treaty unless certain conditions were fulfilled.

128. States' existing obligations and commitments were mutually reinforcing and did not represent the priorities and views of just one group of States. Rather, they reflected the common agreement of all States parties on measures to advance the implementation of article VI.

129. To highlight common ground between States parties was not to ignore the tensions evident among them. Differing views on a number of key issues had been apparent for many years, including on the pace of disarmament and the emphasis to be given to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapon detonation. States parties also differed in their views regarding the recently adopted Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. While some, including the members of the New Agenda Coalition, believed that that Treaty supported the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, complementing and strengthening the obligations set out in the Non-Proliferation Treaty and contributing to the implementation of article VI, others disagreed. That disagreement did not need to be resolved at the current session. Rather, it was important to focus on the fulfilment by States parties of their obligations and commitments under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, including those agreed at previous review conferences.

130. Speaking as the representative of New Zealand, she said that for almost five decades, the Non-Proliferation Treaty had been the cornerstone of her country's international obligations relating to nuclear weapons. Over that period, New Zealand had also assumed obligations pursuant to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and had undertaken additional commitments as member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

131. The confidence and sense of security provided by internationally agreed rules was particularly valuable in times of heightened tension, during which international law gave vital reassurance that there were constraints on the conduct of and use of force by States. In that regard, the international community was fortunate to have in place rules and undertakings regarding nuclear weapons.

132. In 2017, New Zealand had lent its support to the establishment of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in order to supplement the efforts of States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty to make nuclear disarmament under article VI of Treaty a reality. The new obligations established by the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in no way displaced the obligations assumed under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which New Zealand expected all States parties to abide by fully.

133. Recent instances of non-compliance with international humanitarian law were considerable cause for concern. Such instances included the use of chemical weapons, not only in war zones in the Syrian Arab

Republic but also in Malaysia and the United Kingdom. New Zealand strongly condemned any use of chemical weapons, and those responsible must be held to account. Another major challenge in recent years was the violation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of the ban on nuclear tests. However, she was pleased to note promising developments in that respect, including the upcoming inter-Korean summit and the subsequent summit to be held between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

134. Further efforts could be made to enhance compliance with and non-proliferation aspects of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in the context of the preparatory process for the 2020 Review Conference, including through the strengthening and universal implementation of comprehensive safeguards and safety and security mechanisms, and support for the key role played by export control regimes.

135. Considerable work was required to implement article VI of the Treaty and related commitments made by nuclear-weapon States at previous review conferences. Document NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.13, submitted by the New Agenda Coalition, set out all of those commitments, many of which remained unfulfilled. The document reflected the Coalition's expectation that States' nuclear disarmament obligations under the Treaty would be fulfilled with the same rigour that the international community rightly insisted on in relation to all other rules and undertakings in the area of international humanitarian law.

136. **Mr. Saleh** (Iraq) said that his country attached great importance to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the issues of non-proliferation and disarmament, as the possession and development of nuclear weapons posed a grave threat to regional and international peace and security. Iraq complied with all relevant treaties and conventions, and had taken a number of legislative and procedural measures that had enabled it to fulfil its commitments in that area.

137. The credibility of the Treaty was based on the balanced implementation of its three pillars. Promotion of the universality of all international instruments on non-proliferation and disarmament was vital to provide the international community with assurances regarding the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and to provide future generations with a safer future. Therefore, Iraq had voted in favour of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

138. The failure to adopt an outcome document at the 2015 Review Conference was a grave one that undermined the credibility of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The demonstration of greater flexibility and political will was vital for the success of the 2020 Review Conference, and would pave the way for a positive and constructive result that took all Member States' concerns into consideration.

139. He reaffirmed the importance of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which would contribute to nuclear disarmament efforts and enhance regional and international peace and security. In order for such a zone to be created, it was essential for Israel to achieve nuclear disarmament, adhere to the Treaty and place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards.

140. It was important to establish a legally binding instrument that would provide non-nuclear-weapon States with assurances that nuclear-weapon States would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. Negative security assurances were a legitimate request by non-nuclear-weapon States, which had voluntarily renounced nuclear weapons as a military option.

141. The peaceful use of nuclear energy was an inalienable right of States parties pursuant to article IV of the Treaty, and in order to achieve sustainable development that right must not be restricted. However, nuclear terrorism was a serious threat to international security. Iraq therefore called on the international community to strengthen security measures and work with IAEA in order to help countries wishing to develop peaceful uses of nuclear energy to do so safely and prevent nuclear material from falling into the hands of terrorists and other illegal groups. The elimination of nuclear weapons would eliminate the threat of nuclear terrorism.

142. Iraq supported the entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and called on all countries that had not yet ratified it to do so without delay. Through its joint chairmanship with Belgium of the Tenth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Iraq was working to hasten the entry of that Treaty into force.

143. In conclusion, the current session was key to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. He hoped that tangible progress in those areas would be achieved through practical and effective steps to address the challenges and failures that resulted from non-compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

144. **Mr. Pedroso Cuesta** (Cuba) said that, 72 years after the United Nations had been founded with the aim of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, the existence of nuclear weapons continued to pose a threat to the survival of humanity. The only guarantee

against the use of nuclear weapons was their prohibition and total elimination.

145. The international community's overwhelming support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which represented a real contribution to international peace and security, was a milestone in the history of the United Nations towards achieving general and complete nuclear disarmament. Cuba, which continued to prioritize nuclear disarmament, had been the fifth country to ratify the Treaty. He urged all States to follow suit to enable its prompt entry into force. The Treaty expressly prohibited the threat of the use of nuclear weapons, thereby outlawing security doctrines based on so-called nuclear deterrence.

146. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean had made a significant contribution to nuclear disarmament and international peace and security through the creation of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area under the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, and through the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, adopted at the second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana in January 2014.

147. Cuba was concerned by the revision of national policies on nuclear weapons, which could increase the likelihood of nuclear war. The modernization of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems weakened the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the unequivocal commitments undertaken by States parties under article VI of the Treaty.

148. Political manipulation based on double standards and political interests in relation to non-proliferation must cease. It was neither fair nor acceptable for only certain States parties to comply fully with the Non-Proliferation Treaty. No country or group of countries should have a monopoly over nuclear weapons or their quantitative or qualitative development. The only way to overcome the fundamental flaws of the Treaty and its selective and discriminatory implementation was the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

149. The 2020 Review Conference must not end in failure. It should mark a turning point while building on the progress already made towards a world free of nuclear weapons. The section of the final document of the upcoming Review Conference that would cover nuclear disarmament must meet the expectations of States parties and achieve balance with the other pillars of the Treaty.

150. Cuba regretted the failure of the international community to convene a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. It hoped that the next Conference would make progress on that front and that the 1995 resolution would be implemented.

151. The current review process for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, particularly the preparatory process for the review conferences, was ineffective and inefficient. Despite its high cost, it did not achieve the goal of tangible progress on substantive matters relating to implementation of the Treaty. The Preparatory Committee should make significant progress and prepare substantive recommendations to be examined at the 2020 Review Conference.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/SR.2

Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Chair: Mr. Bugajski ..... (Poland)

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General debate on issues related to all aspects of the work of the Preparatory Committee (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

General debate on issues related to all aspects of the work of the Preparatory Committee (*continued*)

1. **Ms. Baumann** (Germany), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, reaffirmed the critical importance of concerted action to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. The States members of the Initiative were deeply committed to their core mandate of strengthening the three pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy established by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, on the basis of the action plan contained in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and the areas of common ground identified at the Preparatory Committee's previous session.

2. The illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continued to pose a grave threat to global security. She hoped that dialogue would lead to concrete steps by that country towards the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner, and strongly urged the country to fulfil the commitments it had undertaken within the framework of the Six-Party Talks, including those made in the Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks, to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, to accede once more to the Treaty, to comply with its obligations under multiple Security Council resolutions, to refrain from conducting further nuclear and missile tests and to adhere to its International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards agreement. The States members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative were committed to the continued implementation of their obligations under Security Council resolutions and to maintaining maximum diplomatic and economic pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

3. The States members of the Initiative were also committed to contributing to a successful outcome of the current review cycle based on comprehensive dialogue on all three Treaty pillars. They urged all States parties to fully comply with their obligations and commitments under the Treaty, in particular by fully and promptly implementing the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, and would themselves continue to build on that action plan by developing new ideas and initiatives that could help to build bridges between States parties. They were also supporting discussions on strengthening the review process, in particular through the promotion of gender equality, and were seeking support from other States parties for those efforts. She drew the attention of the Committee to the working papers submitted by the Initiative (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.24, NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.26, NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.29 and NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.36).

4. It was regrettable that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had yet to come into force, and she urged all States that had yet to do so to ratify it without delay.

5. Sustained, high-level political leadership and unwavering commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty were needed to achieve greater reductions in nuclear arsenals and make progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Trust and confidence-building measures were also needed to create an environment conducive to disarmament. She called on the five nuclear-weapon States parties to make progress in strengthening the Treaty and to use a standard reporting form such as the reporting template developed by the Initiative to provide regular reports on the implementation of their nuclear disarmament obligations. Further dialogue on the information provided in those reports would be welcome.

6. The States members of the Initiative supported the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, and welcomed active collaboration and dialogue between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States in those processes. They were also working towards the early commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (fissile material cut-off treaty), and in that regard welcomed the work of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group and looked forward to the group's final report later in 2018. It was important that the Conference on Disarmament should launch negotiations on such a treaty as soon as possible.

7. The States members of the Initiative were committed to strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of the IAEA safeguards system. IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreements, together with additional protocols, were considered the current international verification standard. She called on all States that had not yet done so to conclude and implement additional protocols without delay.

8. Continued strict implementation of the joint comprehensive plan of action, which demonstrated that diplomacy could successfully advance the objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty when supported by broad international consensus, would ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme. She welcomed IAEA activities to monitor and verify the adherence of the Islamic Republic of Iran to its commitments under the plan.

9. The States members of the Initiative supported the right of all States parties who met their non-proliferation obligations to access the full benefits of nuclear science and technology. They welcomed the central role of IAEA in ensuring the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and in safeguards verification and encouraged all States to commit to the ongoing implementation of safeguards and to effective levels of safety and security.

10. As a diverse cross-regional group of non-nuclear-weapon States, the States members of the Initiative would continue to play a constructive and proactive role in facilitating discussions on those and other challenging issues and bridging diverse positions to help reinvigorate the review cycle process, and were committed to supporting a productive outcome at the 2020 Review Conference, particularly in view of the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

11. **Ms. Davidova** (Bulgaria) said that her country attached key importance to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as the cornerstone of the global regime for non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and was therefore committed to its universal implementation. The Treaty had already made an unparalleled contribution to international peace and security. However, all States were responsible for achieving further progress and fully exploiting the current review cycle to establish a positive and realistic approach that would reaffirm the Treaty's validity and address current disarmament and non-proliferation challenges.

12. Her country was committed to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. The Treaty provided a legal framework for the pursuit of that goal, which could be achieved only through a gradual and inclusive approach. Similarly, the only realistic means of attaining effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament was through a progressive approach based on practical and achievable steps, with due consideration of the complex security environment and the strategic context. One such step was the entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. As an Annex 2 State, Bulgaria had signed and ratified that Treaty, and called on all remaining Annex 2 States to do the same as a matter of priority. Priority should also be placed on the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which would further the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and reinforce non-proliferation norms and obligations. In that regard, Bulgaria appreciated the work of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group.

13. Initiatives in the area of nuclear disarmament verification were vital. She therefore welcomed the imminent commencement of work by the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, as well as ongoing work in other forums, such as the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

14. Further reductions in nuclear stockpiles represented a practical step towards disarmament. The preservation of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty) was crucial for the security of Europe and beyond.

15. Proliferation posed a significant threat to global peace and security. The nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were of particular concern. A peaceful, political and diplomatic solution to the problem was required, accompanied by concrete steps by that country towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. She called on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully comply with its international obligations.

16. The full implementation of the joint comprehensive plan of action made an essential contribution to regional peace and security and assured the international community of the exclusively peaceful nature of the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran. She urged that country to refrain from ballistic missile launches, which violated Security Council resolution 2231 (2015).

17. Bulgaria was concerned by the non-compliance of the Syrian Arab Republic with its safeguards agreement, and called on that country to adhere to its additional protocol without delay. The use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic was a grave violation of international law and of the country's non-proliferation obligations.

18. The IAEA comprehensive safeguards system was key to addressing proliferation risks and implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In order to perform its

duties, the Agency must remain credible, professional and well-funded. As a member State of the European Union, Bulgaria contributed substantively in that respect. Bulgaria had been working for decades on all aspects of the peaceful use of atomic energy, in accordance with the highest safety, security and non-proliferation standards. It supported the crucial role of IAEA in promoting those standards, and participated in various initiatives to develop international cooperation in nuclear energy applications.

19. **Ms. Baumann** (Germany) said that the fiftieth anniversary of the Non-Proliferation Treaty was an opportune moment to reflect on its enormous contribution to global peace and security. The Treaty had enabled the establishment of a sophisticated and successful non-proliferation and disarmament regime which had prevented the spread of nuclear weapons and dissuaded many States from pursuing nuclear options.

20. Germany valued the Treaty's role in anchoring the principle of non-proliferation in international security policy. Over time, the Treaty had been strengthened by the implementation of nuclear safeguards to prevent the diversion of nuclear material. All States parties must use the current review cycle to further reinforce the non-proliferation regime by promoting comprehensive safeguards agreements, accompanied by additional protocols, as the gold standard in nuclear safeguards.

21. Nevertheless, the non-proliferation regime was undeniably facing many challenges. The illegal pursuit by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of nuclear weapons remained the greatest proliferation crisis to date and represented a huge threat to international peace and security. A diplomatic solution must be sought, involving a continued pressure campaign, concrete, verifiable and irreversible steps to denuclearization, and the reaccession of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

22. Germany was firmly committed to the full implementation of the joint comprehensive plan of action, which demonstrated that comprehensive diplomatic solutions to major nuclear proliferation crises were possible. The plan ensured that the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran could serve only peaceful purposes on the basis of stringent restrictions and the strictest IAEA monitoring and verification regime in the world.

23. Other weapons of mass destruction also posed a threat to the non-proliferation regime. Her country was appalled by the repeated use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, which had violated the international norm against the use of such weapons. Those responsible must be held to account.

24. The violation of existing nuclear arms control agreements was also of great concern. Such agreements between the United States and the Russian Federation had formed the backbone of efforts to reduce nuclear armaments and had yielded major security benefits, particularly for Europe. However, the Russian Federation was currently showing blatant disregard for those agreements while seeking new conventional and nuclear military capabilities. She called on the Russian Federation to allay the international community's concerns regarding its non-compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and urged that country and the United States to continue their dialogue, including on strategic stability. She also called on the two countries to further reduce their nuclear arsenals and to commence negotiations on extending the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty), keeping in mind that the process required trust and full compliance with existing treaties.

25. Germany was pursuing an ambitious nuclear disarmament agenda, being convinced that not only defence and deterrence but also disarmament and arms control could contribute to global security. Positive steps that should be taken towards disarmament included a prohibition on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, the entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and a robust and credible regime for verifying nuclear disarmament. Those steps all required cooperation and trust among stakeholders. That was also true of negative security assurances, which had played an important role in building confidence in the nuclear non-proliferation regime and in diminishing the prominence of nuclear weapons in national military doctrines.

26. Germany remained committed to promoting those and other steps to advance implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Mutual trust was of paramount importance to the Treaty's third pillar. The right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes was a precondition for global acceptance of the Treaty and offered many benefits to States. However, it had become clear that its use also involved considerable risks. States that chose not to use nuclear energy must be assured that those States that did maintained the highest standards of nuclear safety and security and complied strictly with safeguards. She commended IAEA for its invaluable work in that area. Germany was currently the fourth largest contributor to the Agency's budget and had been operating its IAEA safeguards support programme for

40 years. It was also a major voluntary contributor to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund.

27. The deteriorating security environment, the erosion of arms control and the non-proliferation architecture, and the emergence of new technologies and threats increased the need to defend and strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Germany stood ready to work with all States parties to that end.

28. **Ms. Whyte Gómez** (Costa Rica) said that the profound changes affecting the international community necessitated a greater focus on compliance with established legal obligations as the only means of strengthening the institutional architecture for global peace and governance. In that context, the full and effective implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, as the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, was essential in promoting international peace and security. She urged all States parties to focus on achieving a successful outcome to the 2020 Review Conference that would reaffirm the Treaty's strategic role and increase its effectiveness.

29. The Treaty unequivocally underlined that the proliferation of nuclear weapons would bring humanity closer to nuclear war, with catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences. For that reason, it established the legal obligation to end the nuclear arms race and undertake steps towards nuclear disarmament without delay. Costa Rica, a peaceful country that upheld international law and respected the highest ethical and moral values, believed that continued efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and bring about the total elimination of nuclear weapons were the only means of preventing the use or accidental detonation of such weapons.

30. The imbalanced implementation of the Treaty's three pillars was impeding attainment of the Treaty's objectives. At the current session, the States parties should diligently assess the progress made in implementing those pillars and, on that basis, draw up concrete recommendations for the work of the 2020 Review Conference, giving equal treatment to each pillar.

31. The Treaty's indefinite extension in no way amounted to tacit permission to maintain nuclear arsenals indefinitely. Disarmament should be neither optional nor subject to conditions unilaterally defined by a handful of States. Furthermore, no State could choose to selectively apply legally binding international instruments or justify the use or threat of use of nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction. Such behaviour would undermine global peace and security.

32. Stagnated progress on disarmament issues in recent decades, the nuclear-weapon States' continued reliance on nuclear weapons in their military doctrines, the current investment of financial and human resources in programmes to produce, maintain and modernize nuclear weapons and the threat of the use of those weapons were bringing the international community dangerously close to the disastrous humanitarian consequences of such use. That risk was at its greatest since 1953. Experts warned that the fact that increased resources were being used to develop ever more sophisticated weapons of mass destruction was compounding international tensions and could trigger a new arms race.

33. Pope Francis had stated that international relations could be held captive to military force, mutual intimidation, and the parading of stockpiles of arms. Weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, created nothing but a false sense of security, and could not constitute the basis for peaceful coexistence between members of the human family. The only way to ensure that nuclear weapons would never be used again was to eliminate them entirely, to which end the effective implementation of all three pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, including its article VI, was essential. The nuclear-weapon States, which shared responsibility for establishing renewed confidence in the non-proliferation and disarmament regime, must make concrete progress towards transparent, irreversible and verifiable disarmament. The adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons bore testimony to the belief of the international community that the legally binding prohibition of nuclear weapons would make a significant contribution to achieving and maintaining a world free of such weapons, and represented a step forward in the implementation of article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

34. Her country condemned the violation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of the international norm against nuclear testing and advocated the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

35. The strength of the Non-Proliferation Treaty lay in the balanced implementation of its three pillars and the obligations established in relation to each one. The third pillar, concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, provided an opportunity for increased trust and cooperation between States, and was invaluable in generating global wealth and prosperity. With regard to nuclear disarmament, efforts to reduce the risk posed by the existence of nuclear weapons and to reach an understanding on nuclear disarmament verification constituted common ground in which the international

community as a whole and non-nuclear-weapon States in particular, had a vital interest.

36. Costa Rica called on all States parties to unconditionally comply with the commitments they had made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 review conferences, including in relation to the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, and on all non-States parties to the Treaty to accede to it unconditionally and without delay. It also advocated the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and looked forward to constructive dialogue on that subject.

37. **Mr. Lagos Koller** (Chile) said that the current review cycle could not be allowed to end in failure in the same manner as the 2015 Review Conference. Owing to that failure, Chile regarded the Final Document and action plan of the 2010 Review Conference as continuing to be fully in force.

38. The outcomes of review conferences were directly connected to the prevailing geopolitical climate. In recent years, discouraging setbacks had overshadowed a number of positive developments, including the expression by a significant number of States of support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, an instrument designed to complement and reinforce the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Certain States took a different view, which Chile respected because the processes leading to the establishment and universal implementation of new treaties, particularly in such a politically sensitive area that was of such importance to international security, were always complex. Indeed, the Non-Proliferation Treaty had a similar history. For that reason, his country would continue to build on areas of common ground with all States that shared its goals, being convinced that all States that had not yet done so would accede to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons once they had succeeded in overcoming their dependency on nuclear deterrence. Chile was concerned by the importance that the main nuclear-weapon States continued to place on such inhumane weapons in their military doctrines. Since differences in opinion on the issue would not be overcome at the current session, it was important that the States parties should reaffirm their commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and make practical progress on steps that, while not a replacement for the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, helped to reduce the risks posed by the existence of nuclear weapons.

39. In particular, he underscored the importance of progress in de-alerting nuclear weapons, increasing transparency relating to nuclear arsenals and promoting the entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In that regard, he expressed support for the statement made by the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization at the Committee's previous meeting. He also supported steps towards the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, the scope of which should include existing stocks of such material.

40. Chile welcomed the recent announcement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it intended to suspend nuclear testing. However, that country must also renounce all non-peaceful nuclear activities, accede once more to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State and accede to the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in order to enable the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which was essential for preserving regional and international peace and security.

41. As a party to the Antarctic Treaty and the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, Chile was committed to promoting the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as essential intermediate steps that had a positive impact not only on the region concerned but also on the entire international community. He therefore underscored the importance of establishing such a zone in the Middle East.

42. Chile highlighted the importance of employing gender analysis tools in discussions on nuclear weapons and, in particular, redefining certain concepts in light of an inclusive gender-based approach.

43. Emphasizing the importance of the current review cycle, he expressed the hope that the current session would continue along the same positive path as the Committee's previous session in 2017 and contribute to the success of the 2020 Review Conference.

44. **Mr. Viinanen** (Finland) said that the Non-Proliferation Treaty was a resounding success. It was the cornerstone of international peace and security and had prevented the spread of nuclear weapons, provided a basis for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and laid the foundation for nuclear disarmament.

45. The proliferation of nuclear weapons currently posed the most acute threat. The nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continued to cause grave concern. Although Finland was heartened by ongoing diplomatic efforts, it continued to urge that country to comply fully with its international obligations, in line with relevant Security Council resolutions. At the same time, in view of the important role of the joint comprehensive plan of action in furthering the goal of nuclear non-proliferation, it urged all parties to meet their

commitments under that plan. The risk of nuclear devices or material falling into the hands of non-State actors also posed a threat to non-proliferation efforts. In that respect, Finland was proud to serve as the international coordinator of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

46. Nuclear weapons must never be used again. In arms control and non-proliferation matters, trust was of the utmost importance. Every actor and action had the potential to strengthen or corrode mutual trust. Irresponsible rhetoric on the use of nuclear weapons could only harm the international community's sense of security. He encouraged the United States and the Russian Federation to continue their dialogue on strategic stability and to continue implementing the New START Treaty and Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Further reductions by those States of their nuclear arsenals were key to building confidence and advancing the ultimate goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. In that context, it was necessary to address the normative gap relating to the limitation of non-strategic nuclear weapons. Furthermore, non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty had a legitimate right to receive legally binding negative security assurances from nuclear-weapon States. Such commitments would be a positive outcome of the current review cycle.

47. The establishment of a multilateral verification mechanism and a treaty banning the production of weapons-grade fissile material was an important step towards nuclear disarmament. Finland was a long-standing supporter of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and renewed its call on all States that had not yet done so to sign and ratify that Treaty without further delay. The recent announcement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its intention to cease nuclear testing, while encouraging, should logically be followed by that country's signature and ratification of the Test-Ban Treaty.

48. Finland was proud to have been the first country to sign a comprehensive safeguards agreement with IAEA, and had also signed and ratified an additional protocol. It urged all States to follow suit to demonstrate their commitment to non-proliferation with maximum transparency. Through its bilateral support programme, Finland had for many years lent its national expertise to IAEA to develop the safeguards system and train international inspectors. Peaceful applications of nuclear energy and other nuclear technologies could bring enormous benefits to the lives of millions, but required the highest standards of nuclear safety and security.

49. The Non-Proliferation Treaty was too important to be allowed to fail. It was the responsibility of State parties to make the 2020 Review Conference a success. They must seize the opportunity to reaffirm the Treaty's significance and relevance as part of the global security architecture, building mutual confidence in order to do so, and work together to make the Treaty stronger and universal.

50. **Mr. Hajnoczi** (Austria) said that his country had consistently condemned the unacceptable and irresponsible conduct by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of nuclear and ballistic missile tests in violation of several Security Council resolutions. That country must return to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, resume full cooperation with IAEA and sign and ratify the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, alongside all other States that had not yet done so. The international community's shared goal of denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula could be achieved only through peaceful means. He hoped that ongoing diplomatic efforts would result in compliance by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with the international system.

51. The joint comprehensive plan of action, which was the most significant achievement in the area of nuclear non-proliferation in recent years, demonstrated that a negotiation-based approach could bear fruit, and it was vital that all parties to that deal should continue to implement it. The plan could provide inspiration for a future solution to the situation on the Korean Peninsula, particularly in the light of the recent encouraging signs of real negotiations.

52. Austria had a strong record on non-proliferation, having concluded both a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol with IAEA. Rigorous implementation and continuous improvement of the international non-proliferation framework was essential in order to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to additional States or other actors. It was regrettable that the continued reliance of certain States on nuclear weapons created an incentive for other States to pursue the nuclear option. For that reason, non-proliferation could not credibly be pursued without parallel progress on nuclear disarmament, a fact that had not been lost on the drafters of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and one that should be borne in mind by all.

53. In that light, he reminded States parties that article VI of the Treaty and the associated preambular paragraphs established nuclear disarmament as a clear obligation with the ultimate goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. The thirteen steps and the sections of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference relating to

disarmament clearly set out the means by which that obligation, and that goal, should be fulfilled.

54. While the progress on nuclear disarmament that had been achieved to date was welcome, very few of the disarmament measures agreed within the framework of the Treaty had actually been implemented. Indeed, in many cases a reversal of attitudes towards nuclear disarmament could be observed, and there had been recent attempts to backtrack on aspects of Non-Proliferation Treaty commitments. It was therefore vital for States parties to reaffirm that all of those measures remained fully valid.

55. Since the 2015 Review Conference, the growing focus on the catastrophic and far-reaching humanitarian consequences of use of nuclear weapons had been a major development in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, he drew attention to the working paper on that topic submitted by Austria and other States and contained in document NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.9.

56. The re-emergence of the concept of "limited nuclear war" in the strategic thinking of some nuclear-weapon States was particularly concerning. If States harboured the dangerous illusion that it was possible to limit the impact of nuclear war, they would only increase the risk of a catastrophe. He reminded States parties that they had all undertaken, under the first preambular paragraph of the Treaty, to make every effort to avert such danger.

57. Humanitarian considerations had also become an important factor in the negotiation and adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was an impressive manifestation of the view held by most States that nuclear weapons, far from providing security, actually posed an existential threat to humanity. In that respect, he drew attention to working paper NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.10, submitted by his country, which provided an up-to-date assessment of the security implications of nuclear weapons. The Treaty was fully consistent with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and was an essential legal instrument that contributed to the implementation of its article VI. Other measures to promote the implementation of article VI should include further reductions by nuclear-weapon States of their nuclear arsenals, a reduction of the role of such weapons in their military doctrines, and risk reduction efforts.

58. Austria recognized the right of States parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, that right did not entail an obligation to use nuclear energy for power generation, or to support such use by others. Rather, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development had promoted the use by States of an appropriate energy mix tailored to their individual circumstances. Accordingly, Austria had chosen not to use nuclear energy to generate power, having decided that the risks outweighed the benefits, as exemplified by the tragic incidents at the Chernobyl and Fukushima power plants. Furthermore, the question of how to safely and permanently dispose of radioactive waste had not yet been satisfactorily resolved. With regard to the current trend of introducing nuclear power to new, energy-rich regions, he reminded States parties that historically peaceful programmes had sometimes been transformed into military nuclear programmes. States that nevertheless chose to use nuclear energy for power generation must apply the highest standards of safety, security, waste management and non-proliferation.

59. **Mr. Incarnato** (Italy) said that his country attached great importance to disarmament in its broadest sense, and was fully committed to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation as essential components of its foreign policy. In that context, he reaffirmed the centrality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a multilateral instrument of paramount importance in maintaining and reinforcing international peace, security and stability. The Treaty remained the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and an important element in the development of nuclear applications for peaceful purposes. The action plan of the 2010 Review Conference continued to provide a good basis for pursuing the Treaty's mutually reinforcing pillars. He therefore called on States that had not yet acceded to the Treaty to do so as non-nuclear-weapon States, unconditionally and without delay, and on all States parties to implement the Treaty's provisions and commitments agreed on at previous review conferences without delay and in a balanced manner.

60. Through its article VI, the Treaty provided the only realistic legal framework for pursuing a world free of nuclear weapons in a way that promoted stability and preserved security. Moreover, nuclear disarmament could be attained only through an inclusive and progressive approach based on concrete and effective measures, including the prompt entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Italy remained a staunch supporter of that Treaty and, as the Chair of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization for 2018, was focusing its efforts on outreach. It called on all States that had not yet signed and ratified the Treaty to do so without further delay. Meanwhile, it called on all States to respect the moratorium on nuclear test explosions and

to refrain from any actions that could undermine the Treaty.

61. The negotiation, by the Conference on Disarmament, of a fissile material cut-off treaty should be a key priority. In that regard, Italy anticipated a constructive outcome to the work of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group. Pending the entry into force of such a treaty, all States concerned should abide by a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. He also welcomed the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament.

62. Nuclear-weapon States bore fundamental responsibility for implementing article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. While he welcomed the reductions made in their nuclear arsenals to date, he encouraged further progress. He also welcomed the achievement by the Russian Federation and the United States of the central limits of the New START Treaty, and encouraged them to extend that Treaty and hold further discussions on confidence-building, transparency, verification activities and reporting. It was also important that they should preserve the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty as a landmark agreement that was key to European and international security and stability.

63. The proliferation of nuclear weapons continued to represent a major threat to international security. The IAEA safeguards system was a fundamental component of the non-proliferation regime and played an indispensable role in the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Accordingly, Italy supported the strengthening of that system, including through universal adherence to comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols.

64. The nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remained the greatest challenge to the non-proliferation regime. Although ongoing diplomatic efforts to reach a peaceful solution were welcome, complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization must be achieved through meaningful negotiations. To that end, maximum pressure must continue to be exerted on that country, including through the strict application of sanctions. The effectiveness of those measures would depend on the unity and determination of the international community.

65. In the context of international efforts aimed at enhancing mutual confidence and strengthening the non-proliferation architecture, the joint comprehensive plan of action was a historic diplomatic success. Italy welcomed the confirmation by IAEA of the continued compliance of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the provisions of that plan. The international community must make every effort to ensure that the plan continued to provide benefits for all. The full implementation of the plan and of all provisions of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) could foster international and regional security.

66. Since nuclear-weapon-free zones were important for peace and security, Italy called on nuclear-weapon States to sign and ratify the relevant protocols of the Treaties establishing such zones, and supported the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction, to be attended by all States of the region on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at.

67. Although Italy had decided at the end of the 1980s to phase out nuclear energy for power generation, it could cite a number of successful examples of the peaceful applications of nuclear technology at the national level and had established several research centres of excellence, which had enabled it to cooperate at the international level on the further development of such applications. In recent years, it had focused on education and training in that field, and strongly supported the IAEA technical cooperation programme. Given that the peaceful uses of nuclear energy required the implementation of safeguards and appropriate and effective safety and security standards, Italy supported all initiatives aiming at enhancing the safety and security of nuclear materials and facilities.

68. **Ms. McCarney** (Canada) said that since its entry into force, the Non-Proliferation Treaty had been the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime, enabling a number of considerable achievements across its three pillars. Notably, it had limited the number of nuclear-weapon States, enshrined the right of States parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under robust safeguards, and provided a legal basis on which to pursue nuclear disarmament.

69. While the current session provided States parties with an opportunity to reflect on those accomplishments, they must also assess new challenges that threatened further progress, increased the risk of nuclear weapon use and limited the effectiveness of multilateral diplomacy. Despite recent encouraging developments, the determination of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to enhance its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, in violation of both the Non-Proliferation Treaty and successive Security Council resolutions, and the risk of the transfer by that country of nuclear weapon-related material and

knowledge to other States and non-State actors, remained among the foremost challenges to the non-proliferation regime. Meanwhile, confidence in nuclear diplomacy had been undermined by continued uncertainty surrounding the joint comprehensive plan of action, and the erosion of longstanding bilateral arms control and security agreements, including as a result of the violation by the Russian Federation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. More broadly, there had been a resurgence in competition between the great nuclear powers, which threatened to reignite the types of arms race and zero-sum thinking that had rightly been abandoned long ago.

70. Although Canada recognized that the international security environment was unstable, it was convinced that meaningful action to strengthen the Treaty's three pillars remained achievable. Indeed, new challenges underlined the need for urgent action. In the approach to the 2020 Review Conference, it was imperative to move forward in a spirit of constructive engagement to ensure a productive outcome.

71. Canada remained committed to the promotion of inclusive, practical initiatives aimed at halting the spread of nuclear weapons, and to efforts to achieve their eventual elimination. In particular, it was proud to lead the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group, which was making good progress in developing a full range of options for the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty. In concert with its partners in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, Canada also promoted increased transparency by all States parties with respect to their commitments under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, including reporting by nuclear-weapon States on their nuclear arsenals. Canada also continued to match its diplomatic engagement with substantial financial contributions, including through its programme to reduce the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction.

72. The principle of inclusion should guide States in all aspects of their work during the current review cycle. That required the equal representation of both women and men, not only in the composition of delegations but also in the formulation of substantive perspectives on key issues under the Treaty and on other matters of international security. Canada would strive to ensure that the values of inclusion and equal representation were promoted in all aspects of its engagement on Treaty issues, and encouraged all other States parties to do the same. In that regard, it was working to ensure the more effective incorporation of gender-based analysis in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all programming related to weapons of mass destruction.

73. The security of Canada, like that of its allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, relied on nuclear deterrence. However, that should not act as a disincentive to action, as appropriate nuclear deterrence did not preclude reciprocal, step-by-step disarmament. Within the current strategic context, more could be done to limit nuclear threats and reduce arsenals.

74. While States parties remained divided on the best way to pursue their shared interests under the Treaty, they must work to build trust and confidence, and seek common ground in order to ensure consensus at the 2020 Review Conference. The current review cycle provided them with a valuable opportunity to improve the global discourse and chart a more action-oriented course at a time when such progress was imperative. She hoped that, through a spirit of genuine collaboration, States parties could strengthen prospects for a safer world, a strengthened Treaty and a more robust multilateral system.

75. **Mr. Gabriëlse** (Netherlands) said that it was States parties' collective responsibility to ensure the success of the current session. Rather than focusing on the challenges they faced, they should discuss how to move forward and ensure the success of the current review cycle. The factual summary of the Chair of the previous session of the Preparatory Committee, set out in document NPT/CONF.2020/PC.I/WP.40, could be a helpful starting point in that process. His country had also submitted a working paper (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.11) to the current session, highlighting areas in which progress might be possible. In addition, the Chair of the first session had elaborated eight guiding principles (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.I/14) that reflected the joint interests of States parties and the shared benefits of the non-proliferation regime, which could also act as a starting point in their search for common ground. He hoped those principles would receive support from States parties.

76. Although the current security environment was challenging, it could help States parties to focus their efforts. They could break challenges down and make them more manageable by asking a series of questions to guide their discussions. Those questions related to, inter alia, how States parties could prevent Treaty violations by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from eroding the authority of the Treaty, and how to prevent similar violations in the future; how to reinforce the norm against the use of nuclear weapons, for example, through risk reduction measures or the strengthening of negative security assurances; which steps towards further disarmament States parties could agree on during the current review cycle; how they could strengthen the third Treaty pillar to ensure that all

States parties benefited from nuclear technology; how to address the challenges faced by IAEA in the implementation of its safeguards mandate; how working methods could be enhanced to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of review cycles; and how the equal participation of men and women could be promoted in the context of the Treaty. The Netherlands would work hard to formulate answers to those and other questions. While that approach should not prevent States parties from engaging on more divisive issues, those issues must not dominate their discussion to the extent that they negatively affected the outcome of the current review cycle. Despite the challenging geopolitical context, it was the job of States parties to overcome challenges and move the Treaty forwards.

77. **Mr. Fu Cong** (China) said that the Non-Proliferation Treaty, as the most important multilateral treaty in the field of international nuclear arms control, had for the past half-century provided a legal basis for preventing nuclear war and the proliferation of nuclear weapons and bringing the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to humankind.

78. The current review cycle had commenced with much uncertainty. On the one hand, calls by the international community for disarmament were growing; the joint comprehensive plan of action was being fully implemented; efforts to reach a diplomatic solution to the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula were at a turning point; and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy had entered a new phase. On the other hand, the United States, which had the largest and most advanced nuclear arsenal, was using untenable excuses to increase its nuclear capabilities, advance its nuclear deterrence policy and lower the threshold for using nuclear weapons, which increased the risk of a nuclear arms race and threatened global strategic stability.

79. Those developments raised the questions of whether to uphold or abandon the existing disarmament mechanism and whether to continue to observe the principle of consensus. There was clear disagreement with regard to the disarmament route to be followed, and double standards prevailed in relation to non-proliferation. There was also a lack of trust, and weak governance in the area of international security. The Treaty was thus facing unprecedented challenges.

80. In the context of globalization, the Cold-War mentality and zero-sum game mindset were long outdated. Pursuing absolute security would only raise tensions and the risk of war. Lasting peace could be achieved only through ensuring security for all countries. During the current review cycle, States parties should keep in mind the aspirations on which the Treaty was founded, safeguard multilateralism and insist on equal dialogue and consultation in order to maintain and promote the Treaty's authority, universality and effectiveness.

81. It was important to respect States' legitimate security concerns. A world without nuclear weapons would not be achieved overnight. In the process of addressing non-proliferation issues, regional security environments should not be ignored. Rather, States parties should promote comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security in order to build an inclusive world, lasting peace and common prosperity.

82. The comprehensive prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons went hand in hand with peace and development. Nuclear-weapon States should take more concrete actions to fulfil their obligations under article VI of the Treaty. While the State with the largest nuclear arsenal bore primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament, all nuclear-weapon States should reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their security doctrines and make a legally binding commitment to the policy of "no first use" of nuclear weapons as the most practical and effective means of advancing disarmament efforts.

83. It was essential to respect the Treaty mechanism. Double standards and utilitarianism, which would severely erode the Treaty's authority and effectiveness, were the greatest enemies of the existing Treaty regime. The provisions of the Treaty must be implemented fully and consistently. It was also important to respect the outcomes of previous review conferences. States parties should constructively engage in consultations, break stalemates on difficult issues such as the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone in the Middle East, and turn outcomes into tangible actions.

84. China was committed to the path of peaceful development and would never constitute a threat to any other State, nor would it pursue absolute security at the expense of others' interests. It had no intention of becoming a strategic competitor, and its strategic intentions should not be misread or distorted by other States. China had always stood for the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It adhered to a strategy of nuclear deterrence, keeping its nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for national security. It had adopted a stable nuclear policy and had committed to the principles of no first use of nuclear weapons and refraining from the use or threat of use of such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones.

85. China supported the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and actively promoted the certification of monitoring

stations in its territory. Four additional monitoring stations had been certified in 2017. It also supported the commencement by the Conference on Disarmament of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

86. Over the previous two years, China had been deeply engaged in the implementation of the joint comprehensive plan of action, and would continue to demonstrate objectivity and responsibility in preserving the agreement with all other parties.

87. With regard to the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula, China had consistently advocated a political solution, maintained an impartial position and endeavoured to promote negotiations. All parties should seize the opportunity offered by the current easing of tensions to move forward, following the "dual-track" approach of simultaneously promoting denuclearization and establishing a peace mechanism on the Peninsula in order to forge lasting peace and stability.

88. China was engaged extensively in international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, taking the lead in building regional capacity in the area of nuclear security and promoting nuclear safety exchanges and cooperation in Asia and Europe.

89. China would continue to support the nuclear disarmament process, uphold the non-proliferation regime, develop the nuclear energy industry in a safe and efficient manner and contribute to maintaining global peace and security.

90. **Mr. Cartagena** (Spain) said that the non-proliferation regime was experiencing a phase that could be described as both the best and worst of times. On the one hand, the current year marked the fiftieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was the cornerstone of a well-established regime and which was valuable not only in its own right but also because of the scope it offered for consensus. The Treaty had influenced the work of IAEA and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, informal export control arrangements, nuclear arms reduction treaties, the international nuclear safeguards regime, security initiatives and cooperation programmes related to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. On the other hand, the evident deterioration in geopolitical conditions, marked by tensions, uncertainty and even open challenges to international legislation, undermined the credibility of the non-proliferation regime.

91. He highlighted, in particular, the nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which to date was the only country to have conducted nuclear tests in the twenty-first century. Spain urged that country, as a member of the Conference on Disarmament, to return to the Treaty and abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes with a view to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. While he noted with cautious optimism the recent easing of tensions, it was important that tangible results should be achieved.

92. Spain was also concerned by current tensions surrounding arms reduction treaties, particularly the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, against the backdrop of the erosion of the security regime that had been in place in Europe since the end of the Cold War, and by the uncertainty surrounding the joint comprehensive plan of action. It was vital to respect the letter of that agreement and strengthen it by engaging in dialogue on related security issues without delay.

93. Furthermore, the use by certain States of the issue of weapons of mass destruction to distort information and disrupt politics was of growing concern. Such conduct amounted to a very dangerous game that ultimately hurt those who were most vulnerable in any conflict: civilians. The international community was currently witnessing such a situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

94. Against that background, Spain hoped for an open and comprehensive debate in which parties continued to make and listen to proposals. The international community must continue to work towards a world free of nuclear weapons. His country supported a gradual approach as the only feasible means of achieving that objective. Any initiative that was not based on compromise or consensus should be rejected, and divisions left behind in favour of building bridges, since all parties ultimately shared the same objective.

95. In order to strengthen the non-proliferation regime, it was necessary to create an environment that fostered disarmament, and vice-versa. The action plan of the 2010 Review Conference should remain the basis for achieving both goals. Accordingly, he underscored the need to continue promoting the universal implementation of the Treaty, to bring into force the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to conclude a fissile material cut-off treaty and to convene a conference on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

96. With regard to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, it was important to highlight the synergy between the responsible use of nuclear energy and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Spain would continue to support IAEA in the design, funding and implementation of technical

assistance projects, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, and had also supported the Agency's Department of Safeguards through a special programme under the auspices of the European Union.

97. Spain, together with Australia and Canada, had submitted a working paper entitled "Nuclear security in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons" (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.14). The paper reflected on how technological advances, the growth in information networks, the emergence of asymmetric threats and the threat of nuclear and radiological terrorism made the topic of nuclear security increasingly complex. It also argued that the Treaty could not be excluded from discussions on such initiatives as the nuclear security summits, the Nuclear Security Contact Group or Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). The paper further noted the clear link between the protection of nuclear and radiological material and the Treaty's three pillars. Further exploration of that topic would be a worthwhile exercise that would enable reflection on what the Treaty contributed to nuclear security, and vice-versa.

98. In the current complex and uncertain climate, the usefulness and effectiveness of the Treaty must be reaffirmed by all States parties. Any failure to take a step forwards, however small, was effectively a step backwards.

99. **Mr. Sadleir** (Australia) said that in the deteriorating security environment, it was more vital than ever for States parties to reaffirm the centrality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and strengthen the non-proliferation regime. To do so, they must focus on common ground and shared approaches.

100. Australia actively participated in two cross-regional groups of States that worked to promote and strengthen the Treaty: the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and the Vienna Group of Ten. Those groups illustrated that diversity was an asset that need not impede progress towards shared goals; that should be borne in mind at the current session.

101. Improved transparency regarding the implementation by States parties of their commitments under the Treaty would strengthen all three pillars, especially disarmament. Another area that deserved renewed attention was the strengthening of the review process. States parties should examine how to focus their efforts in order to optimize substantive outcomes. In that respect, his country welcomed increased awareness of the need for gender perspectives and equal representation in the context of the Treaty.

102. Australia remained committed to the elimination of nuclear weapons, but was realistic about the challenges of achieving significant progress on disarmament in the prevailing climate. Nevertheless, practical steps could be taken to build trust and bring countries together to establish a stronger basis for future progress. He urged nuclear-weapon States to take the lead in producing tangible results on disarmament. A focus on strategic stability, de-escalation and risk reduction would lay the groundwork for future reductions in nuclear stockpiles. There had been useful discussions on risk reduction in the Disarmament Commission. As Chair of that Commission, Australia believed that an outcome on risk reduction would be a positive contribution to the 2020 Review Conference. One of the most effective ways to build trust was for nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States to work together. For example, work on elements of a fissile material cut-off treaty would make a substantive contribution to future negotiations. Meanwhile, serious work on disarmament verification was essential.

103. The prevention of nuclear proliferation was as important as it had been at the time of negotiation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The Treaty, and the assurances it provided, must never be taken for granted. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Islamic Republic of Iran posed key proliferation challenges. The development by the former of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, and its proliferation of sensitive technologies, were an unacceptable threat to the nuclear non-proliferation framework. Meanwhile, it was in the interest of the international community for all parties to the joint comprehensive plan of action to adhere to their commitments, because the plan remained the best available mechanism of ensuring that the Islamic Republic of Iran was committed to conducting an entirely peaceful nuclear programme. Safeguards regimes must remain strong, trusted and appropriately resourced. Australia continued to offer strong support to the crucial safeguards work of IAEA, and highlighted the importance of the conclusion by all States that had safeguards agreements with IAEA of additional protocols.

104. It was important to continue making substantive progress towards the entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which was a fundamental element of the non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. In the meantime, Australia looked forward to the commencement of discussions regarding the provisional application of the Test-Ban Treaty's substantive provisions.

105. The recent abhorrent use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, Malaysia and the United

Kingdom underlined the need for vigilance regarding compliance with treaty obligations and accountability for the violation of international laws.

106. The benefits of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under the third pillar of the Non-Proliferation Treaty were evident from the relevance of that pillar to nine of the Sustainable Development Goals. Australia looked forward to continued collaboration within the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and in other forums to ensure that non-nuclear-weapon States continued to reap the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

107. **Mr. Yaakob** (Malaysia) said that while the world had never been more developed, globalized or dynamic, humanity remained under severe threat from the continued existence of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and the potential for their use, misuse and proliferation. Accordingly, effective measures on disarmament and non-proliferation should be the international community's highest priority. The Non-Proliferation Treaty remained the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and all States parties were required to implement the Treaty in a full, objective and balanced manner.

108. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation were mutually reinforcing, and were essential for strengthening international peace and security. All States parties were obliged to negotiate in good faith on effective measures to achieve verifiable, irreversible and transparent disarmament, and non-proliferation was one of the means of achieving that goal. Therefore, pursuing non-proliferation alone while ignoring disarmament obligations was both counterproductive and unsustainable.

109. He emphasized that the purpose of the Treaty was not only to prevent non-nuclear-weapon States from acquiring nuclear weapons, but also to disarm nuclear-weapon States. The Treaty's extension in 1995 did not entail the indefinite possession by those States of nuclear arsenals. States parties should remain cognizant of the humanitarian dimension of disarmament and give due consideration to the humanitarian consequences of any nuclear explosion. All States in possession of nuclear weapons should therefore never use or threaten to use those weapons.

110. Malaysia had joined 58 other States in signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and was convinced that the political and legal impact of that Treaty would steer the international community towards a world without nuclear weapons. The instrument was legally sound and feasible to implement, and sent a powerful message that nuclear weapons were categorically unacceptable. He therefore called on all States that that had not yet signed the Treaty to do so, and to work together towards its entry into force. Malaysia also called on all States that had not yet done so to sign and ratify the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Pending that Treaty's entry into force, all nuclear weapon tests and related research and development activities must cease.

111. His country recognized the importance of IAEA as the sole authority competent to verify the fulfilment of the safeguards obligations assumed by States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty with a view to preventing the diversion of nuclear technology from peaceful uses. The Agency was also the global focal point for technical cooperation in the area of nuclear applications.

112. Nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthened peace and security by promoting greater transparency and dialogue among States at the regional level, thereby reducing the risk of regional tensions and conflicts. Malaysia was committed to the full and effective implementation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and valued engagement as a means of resolving all outstanding issues. Nuclear-weapon States must provide unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to all States within such zones. Nuclear-weapon States must also ratify the protocols to all treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, withdraw any reservations or interpretative declarations incompatible with the object and purpose of those treaties, and respect the denuclearization status of those zones.

113. In that context, Malaysia supported the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and called for full implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, which was an integral component of the package of decisions that had enabled the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The resolution would remain valid until its objectives had been achieved.

114. States parties must be resolute in fulfilling their obligations, honouring their commitments and striving for progress at the current session. Malaysia stood ready to work closely with all other States Parties in that endeavour, towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

115. **Mr. Koru** (Turkey) reaffirmed the importance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for pursuing nuclear disarmament. At the mid-point of the current review cycle, the priority was to maintain the Treaty as a major instrument for reinforcing international peace, security and stability,

and to promote its universal implementation. Turkey, alongside its partners in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, would continue to play a constructive role in bridging differences during the current review cycle.

116. Turkey supported systematic, progressive, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament and encouraged all nuclear-weapon States to take further steps towards that goal, as it was those States that bore primary responsibility for such disarmament. It was essential to preserve and build on the progress made over the past 30 years. The prevailing complex and volatile security environment required States parties to show restraint and reach diplomatic solutions. Turkey renewed its call for all non-States parties to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States. A world without nuclear weapons could be achieved only by taking into account the international security environment and focusing on incremental steps that delivered concrete results.

117. Turkey also called on all States to uphold moratoriums on nuclear weapon test explosions and any other nuclear explosions. It was regrettable that the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had yet to enter into force. All States that had not yet signed and ratified that Treaty must do so without delay. Another essential step was the commencement by the Conference on Disarmament of negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty. Turkey reaffirmed its strong commitment to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as called for in the 1995 resolution.

118. IAEA safeguards were a vital component of the non-proliferation regime. Comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols were essential tools in establishing a solid verification standard. Accordingly, Turkey called on States that had not yet implemented those agreements and protocols to do so without further delay. It also underscored the crucial role of export controls in supporting the fulfilment of non-proliferation obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

119. It was regrettable that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continued to conduct nuclear and ballistic missile tests in violation of Security Council resolutions. While Turkey noted the recent period of restraint and the suspension of those tests, it urged that country to comply with its international obligations, return to the Treaty, implement IAEA safeguards and ratify the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

120. The joint comprehensive plan of action was a significant diplomatic achievement, ensuring both regional and international peace and stability, and should therefore be preserved. The plan testified to the continued relevance of not only the Non-Proliferation Treaty but also the use of diplomacy to solve disagreements. It was noteworthy that all IAEA reports confirmed the compliance of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the agreement.

121. Turkey supported the inalienable right of States to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. IAEA, by administering nuclear safeguards in accordance with the Treaty, played a pivotal role in the non-proliferation regime and in strengthening the international nuclear security framework. Turkey had concluded both a comprehensive safeguards agreement and additional protocol with IAEA, and in 2012, the Agency had confirmed that all nuclear material in the country had continued to be used only in peaceful activities, which proved the high standard of the country's system for the control of nuclear material.

122. Despite the many challenges that had faced the Non-Proliferation Treaty in the 50 years since its opening for signature, progress had been made and the Treaty had facilitated the identification of areas of agreement, thus advancing the shared goal of a more secure world. That should be the basis for continued efforts.

123. **Mr. Al Kaabi** (United Arab Emirates) said that his country remained committed to efforts to achieve and maintain a world free of the threat posed by nuclear weapons, and encouraged all steps that strengthened global peace and security. The Non-Proliferation Treaty provided an effective framework for the international non-proliferation regime, and was a key platform for the responsible development of nuclear energy. The United Arab Emirates had made good progress in developing its nuclear power programme in full compliance with its international obligations and in line with the highest standards of safety, security and non-proliferation, its four nuclear reactors being in the advanced stages of construction. Thanks to its close collaboration with IAEA, the country's nuclear energy programme was considered a model for countries wishing to embark on their own peaceful and responsible nuclear power programmes. Moreover, through IAEA, his country shared its experience and best practices with the Agency's other member States. The role of the Agency should continue to be strengthened so that adequate support could be provided to its member States. While all States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty were entitled to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, nuclear programmes must remain transparent, peaceful and compliant with IAEA standards, and must therefore be subject to IAEA safeguards. The United

Arab Emirates expected all nuclear programmes to comply with the verification requirements of the safeguards system and thus to build the confidence of the international community and allay its concerns. Additional protocols to comprehensive safeguards agreements complemented that system, and he encouraged States parties to conclude additional protocols as a means of fortifying the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

124. In that respect, the United Arab Emirates continued to regard the cooperation of the Islamic Republic of Iran with IAEA as essential, and hoped that that country would continue to comply fully with its obligations under the joint comprehensive plan of action, Agency safeguards and the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In addition, the Islamic Republic of Iran should work with IAEA to facilitate the verification and monitoring of its nuclear activities, and address all regional and international concerns to provide sufficient assurances of the exclusively peaceful nature of its programme.

125. The United Arab Emirates was firmly committed to pursuing the entry into force, without delay, of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as an important element of the global disarmament regime. It condemned the continued development and testing of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which undermined the non-proliferation regime and threated regional stability and international security.

126. The United Arab Emirates recognized the challenges faced by the non-proliferation regime, and noted the urgent need to implement measures to strengthen it. Progress must be made across all three pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Furthermore, robust efforts must be taken by the international community to achieve the Treaty's universal implementation. He therefore called on all non-States parties to accede to the Treaty without delay.

127. The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East was a priority, as it would support the Treaty's objectives and enhance regional and international security. He hoped that significant progress could be made during the current review cycle towards the realization of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference and the convening of a conference on such a zone. With the aim of advancing the objectives outlined in the Treaty, the United Arab Emirates reaffirmed its commitment to engaging constructively with States parties to accomplish significant and fruitful progress.

128. **Ms. Travnik** (Slovenia) said that her country strongly supported nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, and that the common goal of a world without nuclear weapons must be achieved progressively, through full implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

129. Recalling that in the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, States parties had undertaken to make every effort to bring the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force, she said that that topic had been discussed at the Bled Strategic Forum in Slovenia, a high-level platform for addressing pressing regional and global issues, in 2016 and 2017. In view of the importance of that Treaty's entry into force for global security, Slovenia called on all non-States parties to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay or preconditions.

130. Negotiations by the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty must begin. Slovenia supported all relevant General Assembly resolutions and the convening of open-ended consultative meetings of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group. Those meetings, and the recently established subsidiary body to the Conference, would help bridge differences of opinion regarding the treaty. Significant progress had been made both in that area and in relation to disarmament verification.

131. She encouraged all nuclear-weapon States to participate in initiatives to promote transparency in the area of ballistic missiles, a reduction in the operational readiness of nuclear weapons, negative security assurances and the establishment and maintenance of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which were also important steps. Effective, verifiable and irreversible disarmament required not only active engagement on the part of those States but also appropriate technical and security conditions. She also encouraged the United States and the Russian Federation to extend the New START Treaty and preserve the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

132. As a country with an operating nuclear power reactor, Slovenia attached great importance to the work of IAEA, as demonstrated by its current membership of the Agency's Board of Governors. She commended the significant contribution of IAEA to the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and its work to ensure the ongoing compliance by the Islamic Republic of Iran with its commitments under the joint comprehensive plan of action. That plan showed that even the most difficult issues could be resolved through diplomatic means. Slovenia therefore expected continued compliance with the deal by all relevant parties, which was essential to ensure international confidence in the

exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme.

133. She welcomed the upcoming high-level talks between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and between the latter country and the Republic of Korea, and supported diplomatic efforts aimed at de-escalating the situation and achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through peaceful means. However, she condemned the violation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of numerous Security Council resolutions, and called on all States to fully and effectively implement the relevant restrictive measures. Meanwhile, the Syrian Arab Republic must resolve all outstanding issues and adhere to its additional protocol, which, together with its comprehensive safeguards agreement, constituted an effective verification standard.

134. Slovenia was concerned by the risk of non-State actors acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Accordingly, it supported Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the work of the Committee established pursuant to that resolution. International cooperation in the area of nuclear security was a means of effectively addressing both national and international challenges. As a member of the Nuclear Security Contact Group, Slovenia aimed to facilitate cooperation and strengthen activities in that area. Furthermore, as a country whose experts had been heavily involved in the process of preparing the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, Slovenia underlined the importance of the universalization and full implementation of that instrument.

135. Nuclear security and safety enabled nuclear technology to be used for peaceful purposes. In that regard, Slovenia welcomed the contribution of IAEA to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It supported the Agency by offering technical assistance, and was always willing to share its experience with others and wished to improve its own capabilities. Such capacity-building was vital for any country that used nuclear technology.

136. **Ms. Guitton** (France) said that in the deteriorating international security environment, it was crucial to preserve the integrity of non-proliferation standards, consolidate a law-based international order and unambiguously reaffirm the authority of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which remained the cornerstone of the collective security architecture and represented an irreplaceable bulwark against proliferation crises. The Treaty could be strengthened only through concrete and realistic measures, as part of a balanced and integrated approach to its three pillars. Cooperation and consensus were required to enable States parties to fulfil their collective responsibilities and contribute to international peace and security.

137. Unfortunately, the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems had grown. The previous year, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had conducted an increasing number of destabilizing activities and continued its illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, in violation of numerous Security Council resolutions. The international community must remain united and determined in order to achieve the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of those programmes. In that respect, she welcomed the recent statements by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea regarding the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Those statements must be followed by concrete efforts to engage in sincere negotiations. During the current review cycle, the resolution of that crisis must be given the highest priority. Accordingly, France and a number of other States parties had produced a joint statement, set out in document NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/9 and open to sponsorship by all States, reaffirming their commitment to the integrity of the Treaty.

138. The joint comprehensive plan of action was a robust non-proliferation agreement and an asset to international peace and security. It must be preserved and fully implemented by all parties as transparently as possible, under strict IAEA supervision. However, France was seriously concerned by the rapid development of the Iranian ballistic missile programme and by the transfer of missiles to other countries and non-State actors in the region. Iran must cease such activities and comply with all relevant Security Council resolutions. France attached great importance to efforts to continuously strengthen the IAEA safeguards system, and called on all States that had not yet concluded additional protocols to do so.

139. The unacceptable violations of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention) in the Syrian Arab Republic significantly undermined the international non-proliferation regime, and increased the need to investigate that country's past and present nuclear activities and its possible ties with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In the face of those challenges, the international community must do its utmost to reaffirm the inviolability of the principle of non-proliferation and hold the perpetrators of any violations to account. There could be no impunity.

140. France continued to comply with its Treaty obligations, including those specifically linked to its status as a nuclear-weapon State. In the area of non-proliferation, it had pursued a policy of responding robustly to threats and to fulfil its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Security Council. In accordance with a progressive approach to nuclear disarmament, France continued to implement its commitments under article VI of the Treaty. It remained committed to pursuing the objective of a world without nuclear weapons whenever conditions allowed, and had actively supported initiatives aimed at promoting gradual, realistic progress. In particular, it had participated in the work of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group and contributed to various disarmament verification activities, which built confidence and ensured the credibility of future commitments. Moreover, France had maintained dialogue with other nuclear-weapon States, particularly concerning doctrines and strategic stability. Those efforts were essential for strengthening mutual understanding. Drawing on its mastery of nuclear technologies, it had continued to support the responsible development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the highest safety, security and non-proliferation standards. France also supported the important work of IAEA in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and had increased its efforts in relation to international cooperation and the transfer of knowledge.

141. With regard to nuclear disarmament, France had identified a number of priorities for action in preparation for the 2020 Review Conference. One was the resumption of constructive and inclusive multilateral dialogue, which, unlike recent stigmatizing initiatives, required agreement on the objective of a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all, and on the conditions necessary to achieve that goal. Such dialogue must be based on respect for national and regional security interests, and for the fact that nuclear deterrence remained an essential component of stability and international security. The negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty was also essential, particularly in the face of a looming arms race. The entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was another key priority; accordingly, France called on all States that were not yet parties to sign and ratify that instrument and to cooperate fully with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. In addition, the United States and the Russian Federation, which together possessed almost 90 per cent of the world's nuclear weapons, must continue to reduce their nuclear arsenals, even after the New START Treaty expired in 2021. Further, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which made a crucial contribution to Euro-Atlantic stability, should be preserved.

142. States parties must continue to promote the safe, responsible and sustainable development of civil nuclear energy. It was with that objective in mind that France had submitted to the Committee a working paper, contained in document NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.8, on the establishment of a framework for civil nuclear cooperation in order to share best practices.

143. **Mr. Kim In-chul** (Republic of Korea) reaffirmed his country's commitment to the Treaty and to maintaining and strengthening the non-proliferation regime at the current critical juncture. The Treaty remained the cornerstone of that regime, and since the three Treaty pillars were mutually reinforcing, they should be pursued in a balanced manner. The current review cycle was particularly important given that it coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty. It was essential to prove that the Treaty remained relevant and was contributing to a better and safer world for future generations.

144. Despite a number of remarkable achievements, serious challenges remained. His country was particularly concerned by the threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Since the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference, that country had conducted its sixth nuclear test and launched multiple ballistic missiles. Those activities, which had been met only with stronger sanctions, seriously undermined the non-proliferation regime, the de-facto moratorium on nuclear testing and the Charter of the United Nations. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea could not have the status of a nuclear-weapon State. Its only option was to abandon its nuclear weapon programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, and return to compliance with Treaty obligations and IAEA safeguards. He therefore welcomed the country's recent announcement that it would discontinue nuclear and ballistic missile tests and dismantle its nuclear test site. As the core stakeholder, the Republic of Korea had worked closely with the international community to strengthen the implementation of Security Council sanctions while pursuing efforts to resume dialogue in pursuit of a peaceful solution. Those efforts had resulted in the agreement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to hold summit meetings with his country and, prospectively, the United States. Those meetings were an opportunity to lay the foundations for achieving the denuclearization of and permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. His Government would continue to uphold the unwavering principle of denuclearization and to apply sanctions until the Democratic People's Republic

of Korea had taken substantial action. He requested States parties' support in that respect.

145. Growing tensions and disagreements among nuclear-weapon States weakened prospects for nuclear disarmament, which was intrinsically linked to the current security situation. In order to achieve genuine progress, efforts must be made to create an environment conducive to such disarmament. Those efforts might include eased tensions, crisis management, risk reduction and increased communication. An atmosphere of frank dialogue and cooperation was also essential. Hasty attempts to enforce disarmament would neither achieve real progress nor contribute to the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. States should work together to improve the security environment in general, while taking practical and effective steps to facilitate disarmament efforts. In that regard, the Republic of Korea supported the work of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group and looked forward to its final report. It was also committed to the entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and commended the work of the signatories to that Treaty to build and strengthen the International Monitoring System.

146. Most States parties believed that the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes was an area where wider consensus could be reached. The Republic of Korea attached great importance to strengthening the IAEA safeguards system, including through the universal application of additional protocols. IAEA should be provided with the necessary resources to fulfil its mandate. His country also endorsed and supported the Agency's technical cooperation programme as the core mechanism for providing developing countries with greater access to the peaceful applications of nuclear energy. As an early contributor to the nuclear security architecture, the Republic of Korea had participated in the preparatory processes for the 2019 IAEA Ministerial Conference and the 2021 review conference on the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

147. In spite of diverging views and priorities, all States parties shared responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime. They could not afford to fail during the current review cycle.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

148. **Mr. Yermakov** (Russian Federation) said that he felt compelled to respond to several inappropriate statements made by other representatives in relation to two topics unrelated to the current proceedings, namely chemical disarmament in the Syrian Arab Republic and the incident in Salisbury, United Kingdom. Surely delegations had enough difficult matters to address in relation to the Non-Proliferation Treaty without raising such unrelated issues. It seemed that certain representatives had simply lost their way. The current session was not a Security Council or General Assembly meeting with an open agenda; rather, the shared goal of those present was to strengthen the Treaty. He therefore wondered why the representative of the European Union had suddenly raised the issue of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and accused the Syrian Government of having perpetrated such attacks. Important as that issue might be, the European Union no doubt faced many other important problems for the discussion of which the Preparatory Committee was an altogether inappropriate forum. The claims made by that representative were an unjustified distraction for the representatives of the 190 States who had come to discuss the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

149. Moreover, there was not a single piece of evidence, nor would there be, of chemical weapons use by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, for one very simple reason: that Government had absolutely no reason to use such weapons. The Syrian Arab Republic, which found itself in the difficult position of combating international terrorism on its own territory, had voluntarily surrendered its chemical weapons arsenal in 2013. Furthermore, in 2015, under the strictest possible control of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and with the assistance of many countries, including the Russian Federation, the United States and countries of the European Union, chemical weapons had been removed from Syrian territory and destroyed. It was a different story when it came to terrorist groups. The hard-line opposition remained active, and was supported by the United States and certain countries of the European Union, which did possess arsenals of chemical weapons. Syrian troops and members of Russian police forces were constantly finding such arsenals in liberated territories, and reported those discoveries to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. However, a blind eye had been turned to those reports. The websites of the Russian Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Foreign Affairs contained irrefutable evidence in that regard. On Syrian territory, chemical weapons were being used by terrorist groups, not the Government.

150. One year earlier, there had allegedly been a chemical weapons incident in Khan Shaykhun. The Russian Federation had demanded an investigation. The United States Secretary of State had asked the Russian Federation to provide expert assistance, which it had

duly prepared to do. His country had then been informed that its assistance was no longer required. It appeared that, as soon as the United States had realized that its version of events was collapsing, it had abandoned its call to send experts and immediately launched missile strikes on Shayrat Airbase, for which there could be only one possible reason: to prevent the truth from being revealed. Tragically, the same methods had been used in 2018: for two months, February and March, the Russian Federation had not only warned that the "White Helmets" were preparing a provocation by fabricating a claim that chemical attacks had been carried out in a populated area in the Syrian Arab Republic, but had even identified Douma as a possible target. As usual, its warnings had not been heeded. On 7 April 2018, the White Helmets, who were financially backed by the United States and the United Kingdom, had carried out yet another heinous fabrication. The Russian Federation had done its utmost to allow inspectors, who had been in Damascus, ready to travel to visit the site. However, the United States had instead decided to launch the biggest airstrikes against a sovereign State in history, without Security Council approval and in gross violation of the Charter of the United Nations. The question was whether it was necessary to discuss those issues at the current session, or whether they should be avoided in order to avoid undermining various discussions on the session agenda. The Russian Federation naturally had plenty to say concerning the events in the Syrian Arab Republic and Salisbury, but there was no reason why it should do so within the Preparatory Committee.

151. **Mr. Wood** (United States of America) said it might well be on account of the behaviour of the Russian Federation that so many sensitive issues had been raised at the current session. It was the Russian Federation that had lost its way, through its backing of the regime in Damascus and that regime's use of chemical weapons. The United States had raised the issue because a fundamental non-proliferation norm had been undermined numerous times. While the representative of the Russian Federation alleged that chemical weapons had been removed from the Syrian Arab Republic, it was clear that not all of those weapons had been accounted for.

152. One of the fundamental problems was that the Russian Federation was not interested in an independent investigation into the chemical weapons attacks that had taken place in the Syrian Arab Republic. It had vetoed several Security Council resolutions aimed at re-establishing the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. The Russian Federation always found a way to blame others for things it knew they had not done. In Douma, for example, access had been granted to inspectors only after quite some time. Multiple international reports had suggested that the reason for that delay might have been to allow the Syrian Arab Republic and the Russian Federation to clean up the site. Many questions had been raised, and although no did not have the answers, the United States was entitled to speak out on that violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which was a critical international norm, and encouraged others to do the same.

153. **Mr. Al Ashkar** (Syrian Arab Republic) expressed agreement with the representative of the Russian Federation that raising such an issue at the current session was inappropriate and proved that those who had done so had lost their way and were purposely wasting the valuable time of all delegations. The accusations were a smear campaign aimed at exerting pressure on his country and demonizing his Government. They were also designed to conceal the aggressive policy of the United States and its flagrant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations through the illegal presence of its forces in one third of Syrian territory.

154. Moreover, the accusations had come at a time when the Syrian Arab Army had claimed victory over many terrorist groups, including through the liberation of Eastern Ghouta from four years of occupation by terrorists who had been launching missiles at Damascus, killing innocent civilians. In any such case, there was no reason why an army should need to use chemical weapons, which would not result in any military victory or gains. The positive talks taking place in Sochi, Russian Federation, were being obstructed by certain countries in order to serve their own interests at the expense of innocent Syrian civilians, and to protect terrorist groups. The dishonourable accusations had also come at a time when the United States had failed to secure the adoption of Security Council resolutions aimed at fabricating evidence that the Syrian Government was using chemical weapons, in a bid to blackmail that Government, which would never use such weapons. Such accusations brought to mind the false claims made in 2003 of evidence and information regarding the possession by Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. United Nations bodies must no longer be exploited to sabotage countries.

155. The Syrian Arab Republic condemned the use of chemical weapons, which was immoral regardless of when they were used and by whom. His country had fulfilled its obligations in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention, and had respected the letter and spirit of that Convention. The Syrian Arab Republic no longer had any chemical weapons, as confirmed by the

head of the joint inspection unit of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. His country cooperated transparently with that Organisation and had even invited an inspection team to investigate the alleged use of chemical weapons in Douma. It was cooperating with that team at present.

156. He underlined the importance of the use by representatives of appropriate diplomatic language in all international forums.

157. **Mr. Wood** (United States of America) said that the Syrian Arab Republic had no moral authority or credibility to address the issue, which undermined the international security environment. As his Government had repeated on many occasions, the regime and its enablers would be held accountable for chemical weapons use in the Syrian Arab Republic.

158. **Mr. Yermakov** (Russian Federation) reiterated his call for all delegations to refrain now and in future from raising the issue, on any pretext, of chemical disarmament in the Syrian Arab Republic, which could disrupt the work of the current session. In particular, he urged the representatives of the United States and the European Union not to seek to raise the issue, since the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic had every moral, political and military right to protect its own country. The United States had intervened in the conflict in violation of the Charter of the United Nations. As early as 2011, the United States had claimed that chemical weapons would be used by the Syrian Government and that it would attack that country in response. The United States had then done its utmost to stage such events. Although it had failed, it had twice launched missile strikes against the sovereign State of the Syrian Arab Republic. There was a specialized forum where the issue could be addressed, namely, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

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Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Chair: Mr. Bugajski ..... (Poland)

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General debate on issues related to all aspects of the work of the Preparatory Committee (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

1. **The Chair**, on behalf of all the members of the Committee, expressed sympathy to the Government and the people of Canada in connection with the previous day's attack in Toronto.

General debate on issues related to all aspects of the work of the Preparatory Committee (*continued*)

2. **Ms. Heimerback** (Norway) said that the current session was taking place at a critical juncture: the nuclear and missile crisis relating to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remained unresolved; the joint comprehensive plan of action was under growing pressure; there were fundamentally opposing views on how to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons; core arms control treaties were under strain; there were prospects of a nuclear arms race; and the risk of nuclear terrorism was far from being eradicated.

3. Against that gloomy backdrop, it was vital to preserve and consolidate the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. That would require genuine political will. Despite diverging perspectives, the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons had enabled a constructive exchange of views on many difficult topics and had highlighted the Treaty's importance as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. That constructive approach should be further pursued.

4. The legal obligations established by the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the outcomes of previous review conferences, notably, the action plan contained in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference, should form the basis for the formulation of a forward-looking agenda on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. That agenda should include reaffirmation of the Treaty's vitality; a recommitment to achieving a safer world without nuclear weapons; and the further building of trust and confidence through the exploration of all avenues for upholding and ensuring compliance with existing arms control agreements and preparation for further reductions in nuclear stockpiles, including the maintenance and extension of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty), the resolution of outstanding compliance matters in relation to the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty), and the commencement of strategic talks.

5. Further efforts in the area of nuclear disarmament verification were also necessary. She therefore welcomed the commencement of work by the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. In addition, the early negotiation and conclusion of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (fissile material cut-off treaty) were more relevant than ever. Norway had consistently advocated the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and urged all Annex 2 States that had not yet signed and ratified that Treaty to do so.

6. Cognizance of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear explosions should inspire greater efforts to reduce the risks associated with nuclear arms. A world free of nuclear weapons could not be achieved without a credible and robust non-proliferation regime. In that respect, the universal implementation of comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and additional protocols to those agreements, the preservation of the joint comprehensive plan of action and a solution to the threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were essential.

7. It was vital to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region concerned. The establishment of such a zone on the Korean Peninsula would have a positive impact on the non-proliferation regime. Intensified nuclear security efforts were also an important part of the humanitarian approach, in which IAEA played a central role, and she urged all States parties to ratify the relevant protocols and treaties. In collaboration with IAEA, Norway would be hosting an international symposium in June 2018 on the minimization of highly enriched uranium in the civilian sector.

8. Norway was fully committed to the implementation of article IV of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Civilian nuclear activities extended far beyond electricity generation, and peaceful nuclear applications in a range of sectors were crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Norway encouraged all States in a position to do so to contribute to IAEA assistance programmes in those fields.

9. While it was not possible to disregard the fundamental differences among the States parties as to how best to achieve the elimination of all nuclear weapons, it should be possible to reach agreement on

many steps that could bring the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda forward. In the lead-up to 2020, it was important to focus on those steps. That would require readiness and political will. Norway stood ready to assist in those efforts.

10. **Ms. Werdaningtyas** (Indonesia) commended the Chair's initiative in organizing a series of regional dialogue and consultation sessions on the Non-Proliferation Treaty. As the host of the Asia-Pacific regional dialogue and consultations in 2017 and 2018, Indonesia continued to appreciate the benefit of that process and believed that that method of exchanging views should continue. It was ready to continue its engagement with a view to contributing to a successful 2020 Review Conference.

11. The Treaty's objectives could be achieved only through the balanced, comprehensive and non-discriminatory implementation of its three pillars. However, that balance remained elusive. In particular, insufficient progress had been made on disarmament. Nuclear-weapon States continued to rely on nuclear weapons in their military doctrines. In the current complex global security environment, the principle of nuclear deterrence should be abandoned as an obsolete relic of the Cold War. Persistent adherence to that principle had also impeded progress on non-proliferation.

12. Preferential treatment should be given to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty in respect of all activities to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

13. The loss of momentum at the 2015 Review Conference had hindered efforts to assess progress in the implementation of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference and prevented improvements in transparency and confidence-building measures. The claim that more than 2,000 nuclear weapons had been retired and dismantled by the two largest possessors of nuclear weapons under their bilateral strategic agreement had yet to be verified transparently. Indonesia supported the discharge by IAEA of its safeguards and verification mandates and encouraged nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States to continue to cooperate with the Agency.

14. The conclusion of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons represented a significant development in global efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons. The Treaty complemented the Non-Proliferation Treaty and helped to allay grave concerns regarding the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, as well as being an effective legal measure under article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The treaties were mutually reinforcing.

15. Indonesia continued to call for the earliest possible entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and stressed the immense importance of its universal implementation. It therefore urged all States that had not yet signed or ratified the Treaty to do so without further delay.

16. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones represented a positive step towards attaining the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation, and continued cooperation in that area should be encouraged. Efforts to convene the long-awaited conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction should be redoubled, as such a zone would significantly improve both regional and international peace and security.

17. At the 2020 Review Conference, the States parties could not afford another failure to reach agreement on a substantive outcome document. Indonesia was prepared to work collectively with all other States parties and civil society organizations to pursue the goal of balanced and universal implementation of the Treaty.

18. **Ms. Aitzhanova** (Kazakhstan) said that despite the challenges faced by the Non-Proliferation Treaty in recent years, it remained without a doubt the cornerstone of the international security architecture and the global non-proliferation regime.

19. The recent adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which Kazakhstan was in the process of ratifying, demonstrated the increased sense of responsibility and strong commitment of non-nuclear-weapon States. The Treaty sent a clear signal to all nuclear-weapon States, which must demonstrate goodwill by more proactively pursuing the elimination of their nuclear arsenals in accordance with article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

20. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation were very important to Kazakhstan and required the immediate attention of the global community. Accordingly, Kazakhstan had organized a special Security Council high-level thematic briefing on 18 January 2018, entitled "Non-proliferation of weapons of mass distribution: confidence-building measures". As the President of Kazakhstan had stated in his address to the Security Council, the success or failure of the process to modernize the global security system depended directly on the international community's ability to overcome militaristic anachronisms. Political trust and dialogue should be

re-established. The joint comprehensive plan of action might serve as a positive example in that regard, since it demonstrated the feasibility of multilateral diplomacy in the sphere of non-proliferation. A similar constructive approach could be employed in relation to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In that respect, her country welcomed continued inter-Korean dialogue, which had already significantly reduced tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

21. Although a voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing by the nuclear powers was an important factor in nuclear security, it could not substitute a legally binding document such as the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The prompt entry into force of that Treaty was essential for effective implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The decision made by the President of Kazakhstan in 1991 to close one of the world's largest and most active nuclear test sites, in Semipalatinsk in eastern Kazakhstan, had been the first legal act to ban nuclear tests.

22. The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones remained one of the most effective measures for combating the spread of weapons of mass destruction. By establishing such a zone in Central Asia, Kazakhstan and its neighbours had delegitimized nuclear weapons in a vast region at the heart of the Eurasian continent. Four of the five permanent members of the Security Council had ratified the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia; the United States was also expected to do so soon.

23. Her country's decision to host the IAEA Low Enriched Uranium Bank in its territory demonstrated its peaceful foreign policy and strong commitment to the implementation of international agreements. The establishment of the Bank would be another practical step towards guaranteed access to nuclear fuel for all States.

24. **Mr. Sadleir** (Australia), speaking on behalf of the Vienna Group of Ten, said that the current session represented an important opportunity to consider the progress that had been made and the opportunities that lay ahead to strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty across its three equally important and mutually reinforcing pillars. The Group welcomed the Chair's commitment to ensuring that each of those pillars was given due and balanced consideration.

25. The Group convened prior to each Preparatory Committee session to consider ways to ensure that appropriate consideration was given to what had traditionally been referred to as the "Vienna issues": the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; compliance and verification; export controls; cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy; nuclear safety; and nuclear security. Its work prior to the current session had culminated in a working paper (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.5) that provided a comprehensive, finely tuned and carefully negotiated — but accessible — series of recommendations relating to those issues and to the discouragement of withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Those recommendations reflected a carefully negotiated consensus among a diverse membership representing a range of experiences and perspectives on nuclear-related issues.

26. The strength of the Non-Proliferation Treaty lay in its almost universal implementation, which the Group was committed to protecting and further advancing. The Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was also vital to that regime, and had resulted in a moratorium on nuclear testing becoming a de facto international norm. The Group was committed to achieving the Treaty's entry into force, and therefore urged all States that had not yet signed or ratified it to do so without delay.

27. The Group recognized that safeguards played a critical role in maintaining confidence in the peaceful nature of nuclear activities and therefore encouraged the Preparatory Committee to affirm that comprehensive safeguards agreements accompanied by additional protocols constituted the current verification standard. It also urged States parties that had not yet concluded and implemented additional protocols to do so.

28. The Non-Proliferation Treaty played a central role in fostering international confidence in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which contributed significantly to the advancement of sectors such as human health, water management, agriculture, food safety and nutrition, energy and environmental protection, as well as to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, in order to harness the full benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, States must comply with safeguards and adhere to the highest standards of nuclear safety and security. It was also important to promote gender equality in activities relating to non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

29. Although the Treaty faced a number of challenges, progress had been and continued to be made. Examples included the work of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group to identify and make recommendations on elements of a future treaty, the work of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification to develop credible measures and build global capacity for verifying nuclear disarmament and the establishment of the Group of

Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament.

30. **Mr. Jato** (Sweden) said that the Non-Proliferation Treaty was under great strain with regard to both disarmament and non-proliferation issues. Certain nuclear-weapon States had indicated their increased reliance on nuclear weapons, making the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons more elusive. Against that backdrop, concerns regarding the increased risk of the use of nuclear weapons were deeply felt both by Governments and by civil society. The 2020 Review Conference must therefore reaffirm their shared, strong commitment to the Treaty.

31. It was important to rebuild trust and understanding between States by identifying areas of common ground. That would require flexibility and universal acknowledgement that the three Treaty pillars were closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Progress would not be achieved unless the implementation of those pillars was balanced. Furthermore, all States must abstain from using the Treaty divisively in a manner that could undermine it.

32. Nuclear-weapon States should refrain from using the global security environment as a pretext for inaction. They must demonstrate a clear commitment to ensuring the success of the current review cycle, including by making progress on outstanding Treaty obligations and implementing in full the disarmament provisions of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference. Meanwhile, the engagement of non-nuclear-weapon States should be underpinned by recognition of the value of intermediate steps; they should not make perfect the enemy of good. Sweden intended to participate actively in such efforts.

33. Risk reduction, transparency measures and nuclear disarmament verification were areas in which it might be easiest to identify common ground. Given the increasing risk of the use of nuclear weapons, an effective risk-reduction agenda should be developed as a matter of urgency in the approach to the 2020 Review Conference.

34. The United States and the Russian Federation must continue negotiations to resolve serious concerns regarding the compliance of the latter country with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, without which Europe would be less secure. The two countries should also extend the New START Treaty or, preferably, seek further reductions in their strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed warheads.

35. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must abandon its nuclear weapon and missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Sweden had insisted on combining a policy of pressure, including more effective implementation of sanctions, with a readiness to support diplomatic efforts. All parties were obliged to pursue a peaceful solution to the situation.

36. Sweden continued to firmly support the joint comprehensive plan of action, and expected all relevant parties to continue to implement the plan. Failure to do so would be detrimental to the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. As the IAEA had verified by applying its most stringent safeguards, the Islamic Republic of Iran continued to fulfil its nuclear obligations under the agreement. As long as that remained the case, the plan effectively curtailed that country's ability to develop nuclear weapons. While the country's role in the region and missile activities were clearly cause for concern, the latter being inconsistent with Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), the matter should be addressed separately and not at the expense of the plan. The plan also highlighted the crucial role of IAEA in upholding non-proliferation obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. All States that had not yet concluded additional protocols to their safeguards agreements with the Agency should do so without delay.

37. Although all parties to the Treaty were entitled to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, safety and security were key. Sweden could provide other countries with extensive cooperation and support in those areas.

38. He welcomed increasing awareness of the need for gender perspectives with regard to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. His delegation, together with the delegations of Australia, Canada and the Netherlands, would be hosting an informal meeting the following day to clarify the role of gender in the context of the Treaty.

39. In view of the upcoming anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force, all States parties had an obligation to contribute to making the Review Conference a reaffirmation of the vitality of the Treaty framework. Efforts to achieve that goal should commence at the current session.

40. **Mr. Dhital** (Nepal) said it was regrettable that five decades after the adoption of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which constituted the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the basis for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, the international community's dream of a nuclear-weapon-free world remained unfulfilled. The review process should entail a holistic approach to the Treaty's three interlinked, mutually reinforcing pillars, and develop a robust regime that

ensured total safety and security in the use of nuclear technology for the benefit of humankind.

41. Underscoring the importance of renewed political will and flexibility by all States parties in achieving a successful conclusion to the 2020 Review Conference, he said that the level of progress achieved at the first session of the Preparatory Committee, held in 2017, should be examined and efforts redoubled. The failure of the 2015 Review Conference should not be allowed to cast a shadow over the Preparatory Committee's work.

42. He was heartened by the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which reaffirmed that any use of nuclear weapons would violate the principles of humanity and public conscience. The timely ratification of that landmark Treaty and its early entry into force would generate momentum conducive to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It was essential to move forward with the same spirit and commitment that had been demonstrated at the time of the Treaty's opening for signature. His country also supported the early conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty.

43. Nepal, as the host country of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament for the Asia-Pacific, believed that nuclear-weapon-free zones could serve as building blocks for achieving complete disarmament at the global level. Effective implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference would be a significant step towards achieving peace and stability in the region and universal adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Nepal had consistently advocated the timely disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, negative security assurances should be provided to non-nuclear-weapon States by nuclear-weapon States.

44. Nepal firmly opposed the weaponization of outer space, which should be used for the betterment of the global community.

45. The peaceful use of nuclear technology in accordance with article IV of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and in strict compliance with IAEA safeguards and verification measures, benefited all humankind. Accordingly, cooperation and knowledge-sharing with developing countries in the area of nuclear technology for scientific, humanitarian and development purposes must be enhanced to ensure equal benefits for all.

46. Nepal was gravely concerned that the risk of a nuclear weapon explosion was growing significantly as a result of increased proliferation, the lowering of the technical threshold for nuclear weapons capability and the danger of terrorist groups' gaining access to nuclear weapons and related materials. Peace, security and prosperity could not be ensured by the allocation of resources to the development of nuclear armaments or the modernization of nuclear weapons; rather, human and economic resources, including technological solutions, must be channelled into achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

47. In order to ensure the survival of humanity, nuclear weapons must never be used again, under any circumstances. Their proliferation seriously increased the risk of a nuclear war. Nuclear weapons could not serve any genuine security interests, as they only undermined security. Stockpiles of such weapons created not a sense of security but fear, mistrust and hostility. The establishment of further confidence-building measures and full compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty were therefore critical to ensuring collective security. In that respect, Nepal had jointly submitted a working paper (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.9) that highlighted the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons.

48. **Ms. Cleofe R. Natividad** (Philippines) expressed hope that at the current session, the States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty would engage with one another positively to explore, develop and agree on practical outcomes. A successful 2020 Review Conference would reaffirm their collective commitment to the Treaty and reinforce its role in the global security architecture.

49. The challenges facing the global nuclear security environment should strengthen States parties' resolve to implement their obligations under the Treaty. The two countries with the largest nuclear arsenals bore primary responsibility for showing leadership and maintaining their commitment to disarmament.

50. The Philippines had voted for the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and had signed the Treaty on the day it had been declared open for signature. That Treaty highlighted the political will of a resounding majority of States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty to establish a legal instrument in accordance with article VI of the Treaty and to strengthen the nuclear disarmament pillar. Her country considered the development and reinforcement of multilateral nuclear verification measures to be relevant to that pillar, and in that regard was paying close attention to the work of the Group of Governmental

Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament.

51. The Philippines attached great importance to the establishment of a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances; the negotiation of a treaty on fissile material that examined all stocks of such materials; the entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; nuclear-weapon-free zones, particularly the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone; adherence to IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols; ratification by more States of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material; the establishment of a nuclear fuel bank to ensure guaranteed access to nuclear fuel; and support for IAEA technical cooperation programmes. Her country was encouraged by recent decisions in the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a programme of work.

52. The Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative papers on transparency, reporting and a strengthened review process outlined possible practical outcomes of the 2020 Review Conference. Renewed discussions on how to improve transparency and the efficiency of working methods were very useful in the context of efforts to ensure the long-term sustainability and viability of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

53. The Philippines appreciated the resolve of States parties, including regional groups and organizations, to sustain efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East despite challenging circumstances. As a State party to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, her country recognized that such zones reinforced the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime and contributed to more robust dialogue and cooperation among the zones.

54. Any attempt to undermine the joint comprehensive plan of action would seriously affect the 2020 Review Conference. The Philippines commended the efforts of IAEA, the permanent members of the Security Council and the Islamic Republic of Iran in implementing the plan, and hoped that that process would continue to serve as a model of how multilateralism could shape workable solutions.

55. The Philippines supported calls for increased gender balance in relation to disarmament processes and the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and wished to see enhanced efforts in that area.

56. Her country's firm and principled commitment to the Treaty and the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons was anchored in the national Constitution. The review conferences provided States parties with an opportunity to reaffirm the enduring value of multilateralism in pursuing disarmament and security. Efforts should be made to achieve substantive and ambitious outcomes at the 2020 Review Conference, and balance with respect to all three Treaty pillars.

57. **Mr. Youssef** (Egypt) said that the Non-Proliferation Treaty had played a significant role in preserving international peace and security, and its relevance was evidenced by the fact that most States had acceded to it. However, further efforts were needed to achieve its universal implementation and thus the attainment of its objectives.

58. The current review cycle was beset by challenges, including the reinterpretation by certain States parties of their disarmament-related obligations and commitments and the establishment of policies and doctrines contrary to the Treaty's letter and spirit. The adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was testimony to the centrality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and represented the fulfilment by non-nuclear-weapon States of their obligation to pursue effective measures on nuclear disarmament, as the drafters of the Non-Proliferation Treaty had originally envisioned. The implementation of article VI of that Treaty was an obligation of all States parties and would make it possible to maintain a strong and effective non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

59. Although the three pillars of the Treaty were mutually reinforcing and were designed to be pursued simultaneously and in a balanced manner, there had been a growing focus on non-proliferation at the expense of the other two pillars, particularly nuclear disarmament. Egypt was gravely concerned by inadequate progress in that area. While limited measures had been taken both unilaterally and bilaterally, concerted multilateral efforts were lacking.

60. The upgrade of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new ones were crucial challenges that required the immediate attention of States parties. All aspects of non-proliferation must be achieved simultaneously through parallel efforts, in good faith, with the aim of achieving nuclear disarmament.

61. Cooperation on nuclear matters between States parties and non-States parties was contrary to the Treaty's provisions and agreed commitments, and would undermine all efforts aimed at achieving its universal implementation. Egypt therefore called on States parties currently engaged in or considering such cooperation to reconsider their policies and bring them into line with the Treaty's provisions and their existing commitments and obligations. It also called on all non-States parties to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear

weapon States without further delay, and to place their nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards.

62. Not only had the 1995 resolution not been implemented, but efforts to pursue its implementation were being deliberately obstructed by certain States parties. The resolution had been adopted as part of a package that secured the indefinite extension of the Treaty. The nuclear-weapon States, particularly the co-sponsors of the resolution, should make the utmost effort to ensure its implementation.

63. It was regrettable that although the 1995, 2000 and 2010 review conferences had reaffirmed the importance of the accession of Israel to the Treaty and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards, no progress had been achieved. During the current review cycle, States parties should agree on the measures required to ensure that Israel took those steps as soon as possible given that it remained the only Middle Eastern country that refused to accede to the Treaty yet operated nuclear facilities without a comprehensive safeguards agreement.

64. The inalienable right of States parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes should be at the centre of each review cycle. States parties should promote international cooperation in the field of nuclear energy through the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials, and scientific and technical knowledge. All States parties should actively endeavour to ensure the exercise of that right, in line with the Treaty's provisions, in order to maximize mutual benefits. Nuclear energy could significantly contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, subject to the provision of technical assistance and cooperation. Egypt endeavoured to exploit the full potential of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to achieve its development agenda.

65. **Mr. Molnar** (Hungary) said that over the past five decades, the Non-Proliferation Treaty had proved to be the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, multilateral nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The fact that the 2020 Review Conference would mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force was another reason to recommit to achieving the Treaty's objectives. The comprehensive action plan of the 2010 Review Conference provided States parties with a solid basis on which to do so. He called on the States parties to take a flexible approach in order to ensure a successful outcome of the current review cycle.

66. Hungary attached equal importance to the Treaty's three pillars and strove for their balanced implementation. With regard to disarmament, article VI of the Treaty continued to serve as the foundation for the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. However, that goal could not be achieved without taking into account the complex global security environment and the role of nuclear deterrence. Given the differing views on disarmament, progress could be achieved solely by focusing on areas of common ground, and that in turn would require an inclusive and progressive approach consisting of practical steps that involved the full engagement of nuclear-weapon States and promoted international security and stability. Those steps included the entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and progress on disarmament verification, transparency and confidence-building measures. In that regard, Hungary valued the work of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group, and looked forward to contributing to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament and the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

67. In respect of non-proliferation, horizontal and vertical proliferation risks must be addressed effectively to preserve the Treaty's credibility. The role of the IAEA comprehensive safeguards system was crucial in that regard.

68. The nuclear and ballistic missile programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea posed a grave threat to regional and international security, a situation which he hoped recent diplomatic efforts would help to defuse. Meanwhile, the joint comprehensive plan of action, which was fully aligned with the principles of the Treaty, was a positive example of how controversial issues could be resolved within the broader framework of the Treaty. Hungary therefore supported the plan's continued implementation by all relevant parties.

69. Hungary was in favour of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and supported efforts to initiate that process at a conference attended by all States of the region, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by those States.

70. As a country with an effective peaceful nuclear programme and plans to expand its capacities, Hungary recognized the inalienable right of all States parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty. At the same time, it was committed to ensuring that all actors maintained and worked towards the highest possible safety and security standards. Accordingly, it supported the work of IAEA, which had a central role in that field.

Furthermore, Hungary actively participated in various initiatives and forums that played a supplementary but important role.

71. **Mr. Yermakov** (Russian Federation) informed the Committee that the directors of the key foreign affairs agencies of the five permanent members of the Security Council had met that morning and had discussed almost all of the substantive issues before the Preparatory Committee during the current review cycle, including strategic stability. The group's dialogue would continue and the role of coordinator of the group would pass from the Russian Federation to China in May 2018.

72. The Russian Federation aligned itself fully with the key points of the statement made by the representative of China at the previous meeting.

73. The current international situation was complex. In various regions of the world, the threat of conflict was increasing, including the threat of the use of nuclear weapons. Collective cooperation mechanisms were being rejected and the authority of international organizations was being undermined. Traditional dialogue, respect for the positions and interests of others and understanding of the importance of seeking compromise were being replaced by a kind of belligerent radicalism that defied common sense and blighted any prospects for agreement. The Russian Federation regretted to note that many States were suddenly abandoning their traditional holistic and analytical approach and scrupulous assessment of both short- and long-term consequences. A number of Western countries had even claimed at the current session that the Russian Federation was failing to meet its international obligations. Such baseless and false allegations served only to increase tensions, fuel distrust among States and destabilize existing legal mechanisms.

74. In that context, sustained collective efforts were needed to ensure global security and stability, restore trust and reconcile the positions of various groups of States. A more stable international environment was possible only with the support of traditional mechanisms whose effectiveness and reliability had been proven over many years. The establishment of any new, politicized formats would only increase distrust and suspicion between States. In that respect, the basic principles of the Non-Proliferation Treaty provided a solid foundation for addressing the most complex issues in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament.

75. That fact was illustrated by the joint comprehensive plan of action, representing a unique combination of measures developed within the framework of the time-tested Security Council and IAEA mechanisms and through additional voluntary steps by the States parties to the agreement. As a result, the plan provided full confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran while ensuring its inalienable right to develop a civil nuclear programme. That country's comprehensive safeguards agreement and additional protocol allowed IAEA to verify and confirm the absence of any undeclared nuclear materials or activities. Indeed, the Agency regularly confirmed the country's full compliance with its obligations.

76. However, the joint comprehensive plan of action was a fragile compromise. Any deviation from its general philosophy, breach of its provisions or attempt to reinterpret the text would inevitably undermine the global non-proliferation regime and damage regional and international stability and security. The Russian Federation therefore called for continued faithful and comprehensive implementation of the plan and of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) by all States parties to the agreement, in the interests of the entire global community. The Russian Federation would continue to comply with its commitments under the agreement as long as the other parties did so. He hoped that the joint statement in which the Russian Federation and China reiterated their support for the plan would find broad support among delegations.

77. The outcome of efforts to achieve a diplomatic solution to nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula would to a large extent depend on the success of the joint comprehensive plan of action. Violation of the plan would hardly reassure the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that a potential future agreement would be observed. The Russian Federation was following with cautious optimism recent positive developments on the Korean Peninsula, including a number of high-level meetings with the participation of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the country's recent declarations that it would suspend nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests. While his country had never supported the ambitions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to acquire nuclear weapons and considered its non-compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions unacceptable, it was important to recognize that the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula was possible only through a comprehensive solution to all security issues in North-East Asia, including the growing problem of increasing United States missile defence capabilities. The Russian Federation and China had previously proposed a road map for achieving that goal. In the current circumstances, such a road map was needed more than ever before. His country would continue to provide comprehensive support to political

and diplomatic efforts to reach a negotiated solution to the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

78. The efforts of the international community in the area of nuclear disarmament should, at the present stage, focus on the establishment of conditions conducive to further steps in that area. It was vital to include all States with military nuclear capabilities in those efforts. In that regard, the Russian Federation was particularly concerned by the steady movement towards its borders of the nuclear bloc of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

79. The international community must take proactive steps to address the problems afflicting international security and stability, including the unrestricted development by the United States of a global missile defence system, the development of non-nuclear, high-precision strategic offensive weapons, the prospect of the placement of strike weapons in outer space — all those present were well aware which country was blocking the international community's efforts to prevent an arms race in space — and qualitative and quantitative imbalances with respect to conventional arms. The failure to address those issues undermined trust between States, destabilized disarmament architecture and created ever-growing impediments to non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

80. He wished to draw special attention to the decision of the United States to renounce its support for ratification of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and create conditions enabling the resumption of nuclear tests on its territory. It came as a surprise that that issue, despite being cause for great concern, was being studiously avoided by the Western States at the present session, as if it did not exist and the Test-Ban-Treaty was no longer of value to them. Such actions by the United States represented a serious blow to the validity of that Treaty and to nuclear non-proliferation efforts. If that country's example were followed by other States whose ratification of the Treaty was required for the instrument's entry into force, it would pave the way for an unchecked nuclear arms race.

81. The Russian Federation was firmly committed to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and shared the concerns voiced by various States regarding its future. However, it appeared that many of the representatives present were unaware of the current reality. While the United States continued to make unsubstantiated allegations against the Russian Federation, it was the United States that had been violating the Treaty provisions for several years and was attempting to conceal its intention to destroy the Treaty by shifting responsibility onto the Russian Federation. It must not be forgotten that the very issue of non-proliferation had its origins in the nuclear bombing by the United States — the only country to have ever used nuclear weapons — of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, and the realization by the United States at that time that it itself could one day become the victim of use of such weapons. Nonetheless, his country hoped that the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty could be saved and that the United States would demonstrate the necessary political will in that area. Discussions on the Treaty should be focused and should take place within the framework of the Treaty itself, rather than within the Preparatory Committee. He called on the United States delegation to refrain from making the issue more contentious, and expressed certainty that the United States and the Russian Federation could resolve all related issues.

82. While the Russian Federation supported the inviolability of article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, implementation of that article could not be ensured independently of efforts to conclude a treaty on comprehensive disarmament under strict and effective international control.

83. No progress had been made in establishing a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East. Further inaction in that area threatened to undermine States' confidence in the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The convening of a conference on the topic remained a relevant and achievable goal in the context of implementation of the 1995 resolution, and there should be no further procrastination. Relevant proposals presented by the Russian Federation at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference on structuring preparatory work for such a conference could serve as a foundation for the adoption of a decision at that Conference to convene a conference on the establishment of such a zone.

84. **Mr. Vierita** (Romania) said that his country remained firmly committed to maintaining the Non-Proliferation Treaty as the key multilateral instrument for strengthening international peace, security and stability, to promoting its universality and to enhancing its implementation. On the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force, Romania encouraged all States parties to adopt a progressive approach by minimizing differences of opinion and seeking compromise to advance their shared goal of strengthening all three Treaty pillars. The main objectives of the current review process were to identify areas for further progress and the means of achieving that progress, strengthen implementation of the Treaty and achieve its universal implementation by

reaffirming the validity and importance of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference.

85. Romania was committed to achieving the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons in an effective, verifiable and irreversible manner through pragmatic measures that could ensure real and sustainable progress on nuclear disarmament. Tangible results in that area required strengthened cooperation with nuclear-weapon States and careful consideration of the international security environment. Measures to achieve those objectives included the entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the commencement, within the Conference on Disarmament, of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which would be a crucial instrument in advancing disarmament. Disarmament efforts should focus on the improvement of geopolitical conditions through the development of confidence- and transparency-building measures.

86. He welcomed the progress made by nuclear-weapon States in implementing article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the achievement of the central limits of the New START Treaty. It was also important to preserve the viability of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which was an essential instrument for international security and stability.

87. The development of nuclear and ballistic programmes, which threatened international peace and security and the global non-proliferation regime in complete disregard of Security Council resolutions and international obligations, was of serious concern. In that context, he welcomed ongoing diplomatic efforts to reach a peaceful solution, including the upcoming high-level talks on denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, while underlining the need for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to demonstrate genuine political will to achieve complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization and to address the international community's concerns.

88. Romania welcomed the monitoring by IAEA of the joint comprehensive plan of action through a robust technical mechanism. Continued full and rigorous implementation of the plan, in keeping with the letter and spirit of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), would foster regional and international security and build trust among partie .

89. The 1995 resolution remained valid. However, progress in establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region required dialogue and increased confidence among relevant parties on the basis of arrangements freely agreed upon by them. Romania strongly condemned any use of weapons of mass destruction, for which there could be no justification and which must be addressed resolutely by the international community.

90. Universal implementation of IAEA additional protocols, which were the de facto standard for verifying safeguards obligations, would significantly enhance the international security environment and strengthen the non-proliferation regime. Romania reaffirmed its support for IAEA and its work to monitor compliance with nuclear safeguards worldwide, and the need to ensure that the Agency had both the resources and authority to fulfil its mandate.

91. The international community must focus its attention on preventing, detecting and responding adequately to acts of nuclear terrorism. In that respect, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which helped countries to increase their counter-terrorism capabilities, was of unique value as part of the global nuclear security architecture.

92. The promotion and implementation of the highest safety, security and non-proliferation standards by all States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty was crucial to ensure the safe use of nuclear energy. Over the years, his country had demonstrated a strong commitment to nuclear safety by significantly strengthening its regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety, making important progress in the management of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel, as certified by IAEA experts in 2017.

93. In order to advance the Treaty and strengthen the global non-proliferation regime, it was the collective responsibility of States parties to display a constructive and balanced approach in addressing current challenges. Bridging political differences was in the interest of the Treaty and the entire international community.

94. **Mr. Gaffey** (Ireland) said that in 1958, when Ireland had introduced the first United Nations resolutions that would eventually lead to adoption of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the prospect of a world in which many actors would acquire the means to build their own nuclear arsenals had been very real. As the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force approached, many of its objectives had been achieved. Very few States had remained outside the Treaty and gone on to develop nuclear weapons. The five nuclear-weapon States had become States parties and were bound by the commitment to nuclear disarmament under article VI; a commitment that had been strengthened in 2000 by their undertaking to eliminate their nuclear weapons. Many States had chosen to be part of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Furthermore, in 2017, almost two-thirds of United Nations Member States had voted to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

The significance of that Treaty lay in its ground-breaking content and the progress it represented towards the fulfilment of the Non-Proliferation Treaty's disarmament provisions.

95. The international community had built a strong framework of supporting institutions around the Non-Proliferation Treaty. IAEA, in particular, had built up an impressive expertise structure and an enabling framework for the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Meanwhile, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization had strengthened the norm against nuclear testing.

96. Through the development of export control regimes, including the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime, States had been assisted in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile technology without preventing the transfer of technology and materials for peaceful uses.

97. The Non-Proliferation Treaty had helped to promote many far-reaching agreements aimed at preventing further proliferation and facilitating bilateral nuclear disarmament, including the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms and the New START Treaty.

98. However, despite those achievements, the joint comprehensive plan of action, which had been negotiated with great care, was under threat. Meanwhile, disarmament efforts had stalled. In spite of the successful outcome of the 2010 Review Conference, consensus had not been reached at the 2015 Review Conference. The Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had not entered into force and nuclear testing by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had undermined the global norm against such testing. Moreover, efforts to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in military doctrines and in nuclear alliances had faltered, and the use of nuclear weapons other than as deterrents appeared to be under consideration. It was therefore vital for States parties to renew their efforts to overcome divisions regarding nuclear disarmament.

99. In the context of increased international tensions and the heightened risk of detonation of a nuclear weapon with catastrophic humanitarian consequences, Ireland urged the nuclear-weapon States to work on risk reduction measures, such as de-alerting their nuclear weapons, as a matter of urgency, and encouraged the United States and the Russian Federation to re-engage on a successor agreement to the New START Treaty. Furthermore, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East should be addressed urgently. It was time to reassess how progress could be made and trust built through dialogue.

100. The Chair's factual summary of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference gave grounds for hope, including recognition of the need to increase women's participation in nuclear disarmament forums. Ireland was preparing to present a working paper that discussed the role of gender in the Non-Proliferation Treaty and that was part of a research project entitled "Nuclear Disarmament, the Missing Link in Multilateralism", which aimed to more effectively connect nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation to the international community's other major goals, notably within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals.

101. A nuclear-weapon-free world was still possible, but the attainment of that goal required leadership, courage and hard work. It was the shared obligation of the States parties to demonstrate those values at the current session.

102. **Mr. Alghunaim** (Kuwait) reaffirmed his country's commitment to preserving international peace and security and supporting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation through respect for, and the promotion and preservation of, international agreements. That commitment was reflected by its membership of the Security Council.

103. The most effective way to eliminate the risks posed by nuclear weapons and ensure non-proliferation was through the total elimination of nuclear weapons without further delay. Since the international community agreed that the Non-Proliferation Treaty was the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime, it was important to reaffirm its credibility, particularly in light of developments on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of its entry into force. All States bore responsibility for that task and must work together to ensure a successful 2020 Review Conference.

104. While all States parties were aware of the progress achieved under the Treaty, including the reduction in nuclear arsenals and the transfer of knowledge regarding the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, they should not overlook current challenges, including the conduct of nuclear tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the declaration by certain countries that they intended to develop and modernize their nuclear arsenals and make nuclear deterrence an integral part of their military doctrines, and the failure to address the nuclear programme of Israel. At the current session, participants should discuss those developments and

identify mechanisms to address them within the framework of the Treaty.

105. Kuwait strongly condemned all acts that undermined security, including the nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. However, that country's recent decision to cease its nuclear tests should be regarded as a positive step that would build confidence and diffuse tensions.

106. He reaffirmed the importance of universal implementation of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which complemented the disarmament regime, and its prompt entry into force through ratification by all remaining countries.

107. The possession and acquisition of nuclear weapons led only to further instability; only their total elimination would protect humanity. Kuwait therefore called on nuclear-weapon States to abandon their nuclear-weapon-based defence strategies and stop developing their nuclear arsenals. Meanwhile, the fulfilment by non-nuclear-weapon States of their commitments under the Non-Proliferation Treaty was essential and demonstrated their understanding of the seriousness of the possession and use of nuclear weapons.

108. Universal implementation of the Treaty could be achieved only if Israel acceded to it, especially since Israel was the only Middle Eastern country that had not yet done so. Israel was also impeding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The 1995 resolution must be enforced. That was the responsibility of all States parties, particularly the three depositary States and the other nuclear-weapon States. The outcomes of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 review conferences must also be implemented.

109. The right of all countries to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in line with international and IAEA agreements must not be reinterpreted. In that context, his country commended the work of IAEA and highlighted the importance of its technical cooperation programmes in transferring knowledge and helping developing countries to build their capacities. Kuwait had supported various IAEA activities in that area, including through its significant funding of efforts to establish a low-enriched uranium bank in Kazakhstan.

110. The universality of IAEA comprehensive safeguards and voluntary accession to additional protocols were important aspects of the non-proliferation regime. In that connection, Kuwait welcomed the conclusion by the State of Palestine of a comprehensive safeguards agreement.

111. **Mr. Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil) said that the already delicate task of preparing for the 2020 Review Conference was further complicated by the circumstances under which the Preparatory Committee was meeting.

112. However, there had been recent glimmers of hope, including the adoption and opening for signature of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was the most important development in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in over two decades, as recognized by the awarding of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. As the first country to sign that Treaty, Brazil was convinced of its consistency with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and of the treaties' complementarity. Other positive progress included reductions in nuclear arsenals under the New START Treaty and resumed dialogue on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. However, there had also been a deterioration in international security and relations between nuclear-weapon States, accompanied by troubling signs of a new, profoundly misguided reliance on nuclear weapons and related deterrence doctrines.

113. Warnings against the modernization of nuclear weapons consistently issued by his and other countries had proven prophetic. There was widespread concern that a new arms race was already under way, and nuclear-weapon States were openly developing nuclear weapons and delivery systems. Those developments directly contradicted the commitments made under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, raised doubts regarding the intention of those countries to pursue the implementation of article VI and undermined the Treaty and its three pillars.

114. The new arms race appeared to be based on the untested and potentially disastrous convergence of new technologies with the traditional concept of nuclear deterrence. The blurring of lines between conventional and nuclear, tactical and strategic and kinetic and non-kinetic means of attack, particularly the use of cybertools, challenged conventional wisdom on nuclear weapons and introduced uncertainty into an area where there was no margin for error. The heightened rhetoric accompanying that trend, coupled with political brinkmanship and strategic recklessness, added to his country's concerns.

115. The Treaty had had some success in preventing proliferation, and had made it possible to overcome several challenges. However, Brazil was particularly concerned by signs that the commitments made under the joint comprehensive plan of action were not being honoured. The unravelling of that plan, which had been

approved by the Security Council and its implementation consistently certified by IAEA, would create doubt regarding the multilateral system's credibility and effectiveness. Furthermore, the accession to the Nuclear Suppliers Group of non-States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty might undermine the integrity of the Treaty regime if no criteria for such accession were agreed on and if a case-by-case approach was not taken. Such a haphazard attitude to such critical issues would bode ill for the non-proliferation regime, as it defied the fundamental concept of a rules-based system.

116. It was against that backdrop that States parties must intensify their efforts to protect and maintain the Non-Proliferation Treaty through full compliance with its obligations. In that respect, Brazil and Argentina had built a unique relationship of cooperation and mutual trust, underpinned by the work of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials. States parties must also reaffirm the commitments unanimously agreed at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 review conferences, and respond to current challenges with renewed energy and focus. The Non-Proliferation Treaty regime was a fundamental component of the global peace and security architecture, and it was the collective responsibility of the States parties to reaffirm and build on to ensure a successful 2020 Review Conference and the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons.

117. **Mr. Sadleir** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of the group of States comprising Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey, said that the fiftieth anniversary of the Non-Proliferation Treaty obliged States parties to be forward-looking and focus on their common interest in supporting and strengthening the Treaty. They must minimize differences and reach compromise to advance the shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons. That goal should be pursued through a progressive approach involving pragmatic and effective steps to safely eliminate nuclear weapons. Prospects for progress should be considered in light of the international security environment and without losing sight of broader concerns regarding the risks posed by nuclear weapons. Indeed, the Non-Proliferation Treaty had always sought to balance ambitious goals with geopolitical realities.

118. One such reality was the threat posed to the international community and the non-proliferation regime by the nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Moreover, there were diverging views on how best to advance multilateral nuclear disarmament. Those differences must not hinder efforts to collaborate in areas of common ground across all three pillars of the Treaty.

119. Progress on nuclear disarmament was impossible without the direct involvement of nuclear-weapon States, which had special responsibilities in that area. Their participation in ways that built the trust required to achieve further reductions in their arsenals was essential, but was possible only through the constructive and sustained engagement of all States parties.

120. As the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, the Non-Proliferation Treaty provided the foundation for States to work together to achieve common objectives. States parties should use the current session to reaffirm its goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons through effective and inclusive measures.

121. **Mr. Podhorsky** (Slovakia) said that the fiftieth anniversary of the Non-Proliferation Treaty provided States parties with a good opportunity to reaffirm the centrality and integrity of the Treaty as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and the further development of applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

122. Slovakia was committed to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, which should be achieved through a pragmatic and progressive approach that took into account the prevailing security environment and focused on implementing the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference and the thirteen steps. The urgent revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament was also essential to achieve treaty-based disarmament and arms control. His country continued to support the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

123. The entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was another crucial step in advancing disarmament and non-proliferation. Accordingly, Slovakia called on all States that had not ratified that Treaty to do so without further delay. Slovakia had been actively contributing to capacity-building efforts in support of the Treaty since 2001, mainly by hosting various training and on-site inspection activities, and stood ready to extend its cooperation activities.

124. Slovakia condemned the continued conduct by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of nuclear and

ballistic missile tests, which represented a grave threat to international security and a flagrant violation of multiple Security Council resolutions. While there had been recent encouraging developments in that area, the international community must maintain maximum pressure on that country until it embarked on a credible path towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. Meanwhile, Slovakia welcomed the progress achieved to date under the joint comprehensive plan of action, and supported the plan's continued full and effective implementation.

125. The peaceful uses of nuclear energy remained a key priority of, and was of strategic importance to, his country. Nuclear energy continued to occupy a stable position in the national energy mix and was a main pillar of the national energy policy. It increased the security of the country's energy supply and enabled the affordable generation of sufficient, environmentally-friendly energy. Two new units were under construction at the Mochovce site and a new nuclear facility was planned at the Jaslovske Bohunice site.

126. Nuclear safety was a prerequisite for the use of nuclear energy. Slovakia supported IAEA efforts to globalize nuclear safety by integrating safety-related activities, assisting member States in the implementation of IAEA safety standards and promoting adherence to the relevant international conventions. It also supported the IAEA technical cooperation programme and the Agency's role in further developing the peaceful applications of nuclear technology.

127. **Ms. Rodriguez Ramirez** (Panama) said that since the 2020 Review Conference would be the first held since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the States parties should commit to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies in line with Goal 16. In that context, her country was firmly committed to promoting peace and security, and supported all multilateral initiatives aimed at disarmament and non-proliferation.

128. Panama attached the utmost importance to the decisions made at Non-Proliferation Treaty review conferences. In that spirit, it had jointly submitted a working paper (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.9) on the humanitarian consequences of use of nuclear weapons.

129. Although seven decades had passed since the adoption of the first General Assembly resolution on nuclear disarmament, work remained to be done, especially given the prevailing complex international environment characterized by tensions and great uncertainty. The persistence of States that defended unjustifiable stances by assigning a higher value to national security than to the survival of humanity was precisely what had led to the current dire situation.

130. She noted with serious concern that certain States were forging ahead with programmes to broaden, modernize and hone their nuclear weapons, delivery systems and related materials and technologies, as well as giving a prominent position to those devices in their defence and security doctrines and deterrence policies. Such practices would only lead to a new arms race, which would undermine the Treaty's principles and objectives. Furthermore, the risk of those weapons' falling into terrorist hands and their vulnerability to cyberattacks were alarming.

131. While the strategic considerations and national security of some States must be acknowledged, nuclear weapons would undeniably cause catastrophic damage to human health, the environment, food security and socioeconomic development. Moreover, ionizing radiation had a disproportionate effect on women and girls. The use or threat of use of nuclear weapons also violated the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Furthermore, their use would constitute a crime against humanity. They should never be used again.

132. Panama urged all States that were not parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty to accede to it unconditionally and without delay, and to place their nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. It also underscored the importance of the entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and encouraged States that had not yet ratified that Treaty to do so.

133. The only effective safeguard against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons was their transparent, irreversible and verifiable elimination within a multilaterally agreed time frame. She therefore welcomed the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which provided a historic opportunity for nuclear disarmament and full compliance with article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, she called for the negotiation of a legally binding universal instrument on negative security assurances, and also called on all parties to convene an international conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as agreed in the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference. Lastly, she underscored the inalienable right of States parties to access the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in accordance with article IV of the Treaty.

134. **Mr. Kono** (Japan) said that the Non-Proliferation Treaty had enabled the international community to overcome several crises and prevented the use of

nuclear weapons in war since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Nuclear stockpiles had been reduced by 85 per cent since the Cold War and nuclear proliferation has been limited to a greater extent than anticipated. For example, South Africa had abandoned its nuclear development programme and acceded to the Treaty.

135. As the only country that had experienced nuclear devastation during war, Japan knew how catastrophic the consequences were and therefore considered itself responsible for leading international efforts to achieve the shared goal of a safer world free of nuclear weapons. Since the Treaty offered the most universal framework for achieving a balance between the addressing of security threats and avoidance of the devastating humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, its maintenance and reinforcement would form the basis of his country's efforts in that regard. Concrete and practical measures must also be established with the cooperation of both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States.

136. His country had submitted a working paper (NPT/CONF.2020/PC.II/WP.37) containing a series of recommendations formulated by the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament. The recommendations, which were intended to provide a meaningful reference for the international community, stressed the need for civility in discourse and respect for divergent views, and for States parties to demonstrate their "ownership" of the Treaty. The recommendations also proposed concrete measures for a rapprochement between States with different approaches, and highlighted several issues that must be resolved to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. The aim was to reconcile different views through open and active discussions among experts from nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States.

137. Japan called on the international community to engage in concrete actions on the basis of the three bridge-building measures proposed in the recommendations. Firstly, States should make efforts to increase transparency, which would improve communication, build confidence and decrease distrust and misunderstandings, thereby reducing risk and contributing to a stronger review process. Secondly, States should establish an effective mechanism for nuclear disarmament verification, which was essential in order to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons, including the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The process of developing such a mechanism would also build confidence among members of the international community. Japan regarded that task as urgent, and would actively contribute to the discussions of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament in May 2018. Thirdly, there should be interactive discussions between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States on such topics as how to contribute effectively to threat reduction and how to address security concerns emerging from the nuclear disarmament process.

138. All States parties to the Treaty shared responsibility for building momentum in the approach to the 2020 Review Conference. Japan and other members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative would lead those efforts. Japan would also continue to promote the early entry into force and universalization of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and called for increased participation in the International Monitoring System and for the prompt commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. It would contribute to discussions regarding the substantive components of such a treaty within the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group.

139. Japan placed great emphasis on conveying to the world the reality of atomic bombings, and commended the hibakusha — the survivors of the atomic explosions in Hiroshima and Nagasaki — for their tireless efforts in that respect. It intended to invite world leaders and younger generations to visit those cities, and would promote disarmament education and capacity-building.

140. The nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea posed a serious challenge to the international non-proliferation regime. That country's move towards dialogue was the result of the international community's coordinated efforts to apply the maximum pressure. While Japan welcomed the announcement by the country that it would discontinue nuclear testing and dismantle its test site, which it hoped would result in the dismantling of the country's nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, further steps were needed and pressure must continue to be applied. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must heed the calls of the international community for its signature and ratification of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

141. The joint comprehensive plan of action contributed to strengthening the international non-proliferation regime and its continued full implementation was important. He hoped that the issue of ballistic missile testing by the Islamic Republic of

Iran would be solved through discussions between the relevant countries.

142. Japan supported IAEA efforts to enhance and streamline its safeguards system, which was an essential tool in efforts to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime. As the most practical and effective way to enhance that system, comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols must be universally implemented.

143. The shared commitment by nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States to achieving the goals of the Non-Proliferation Treaty would be a meaningful starting point for building bridges towards nuclear disarmament. He hoped that all States parties and civil society would work together so that future generations recalled the 2020 Review Conference as the point at which sufficient momentum had been created to overcome different approaches and at which a significant step had been taken towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

144. **Mr. Grossi** (Argentina) said that the 2020 Review Conference was an opportunity to reaffirm States parties' commitment to the necessary balance of rights and obligations that were still relevant half a century after the Non-Proliferation Treaty's entry into force.

145. The Treaty's three pillars had evolved over the years to reflect the legal and political framework that underpinned the policies of both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. The current international context necessitated analysis of the best way to keep that framework up to date in order to achieve the goal of a robust regime that discouraged countries from considering the acquisition of nuclear weapons and that ensured the verifiable, transparent and irreversible destruction of existing weapons.

146. The current situation posed significant challenges and highlighted not only the Treaty's importance and relevance but also States parties' continued responsibility for preventing the escalation of conflict leading to the use of nuclear weapons. The re-emergence of the use of weapons of mass destruction was lamentable. The issues on the Treaty agenda concerned not only specialists and diplomats but all humanity, having a direct impact on international peace, security and stability.

147. Argentina welcomed recent declarations by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it had decided to halt nuclear and missile tests. He hoped that the upcoming summit meeting between that country and the United States, as well as the inter-Korean summit, would consolidate that progress and pave the way for more ambitious and verifiable agreements. In particular, the signature and ratification by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the return to the country of IAEA inspectors would be positive signs.

148. While many States might feel frustrated by the failure to implement various Treaty goals, it was important to recognize that the world would be a considerably darker place without it. Confidence in the relevance and permanence of the Treaty counterbalanced the urgent concerns raised by the international security situation.

149. The 2020 Review Conference provided an opportunity to recommit to the Treaty. That was particularly important in view of the failure of the States parties to reach consensus at the 2015 Review Conference. States parties must focus their efforts in order to prevent the review process being held hostage to political issues that, while important, must not distract them from fulfilling the Conference's mandate, or from the positive overall picture, to which a number of developments had contributed. For example, following the Fukushima Daiichi accident, States had taken a series of actions that had resulted in substantive improvements in the area of nuclear safety. Likewise, efforts in the field of security had improved drastically through high-level initiatives, including a series of presidential summits and other multinational undertakings that would have seemed unimaginable only a few years earlier. There had been significant development in the area of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, supported by the IAEA safeguards system, which had also undergone considerable modernization and was of particular interest to developing countries. All those aspects deserved systematic and considered review.

150. Although the Non-Proliferation Treaty had made a substantial contribution to international security, work remained to be done. Guidance on how to achieve further progress could be found in the articles of the Treaty itself. The international community was entitled to demand greater progress and political commitment. The current session was an opportunity to improve the preparatory process and lay the foundations for a successful 2020 Review Conference.

151. **Mr. Lapsley** (United Kingdom) said that thanks to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the number of nuclear-weapon States had remained a single digit, proliferation had been curbed, and a comprehensive safeguards system had been established. The contribution to development made by the peaceful uses of nuclear

energy also served to highlight the benefits derived from the Treaty.

152. The Treaty represented the overall arms control and non-proliferation architecture. The decision by certain States to challenge the collective body of rules, norms and standards that the international community had painstakingly constructed was concerning and undermined the security and prosperity of all.

153. In the past year, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had violated a series of Security Council resolutions, testing its largest ever nuclear explosive device and its longest-range ballistic missile. He hoped that the planned talks between the leaders of that country, South Korea and the United States would demonstrate that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea understood that only a change of course could result in the security and prosperity it allegedly sought.

154. As the development by the Russian Federation of new missile systems raised serious questions about its compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, he urged that country to engage in constructive dialogue through the mechanisms provided for by the Treaty to address the international community's concerns.

155. Most recently and shockingly, chemical weapons had been used in Douma by the regime of President Assad and in Salisbury, United Kingdom, by the Russian Federation, in violation of treaty obligations and norms. It was both appropriate and necessary to mention those issues in the current forum because they raised questions regarding the credibility of the non-proliferation architecture, the multilateral system and the trust that underpinned it, and were relevant to other issues that were to be addressed at the current session.

156. Some States upheld the international arms control framework and some did not. Those present must all fulfil their responsibility to protect and implement agreed arms control rules to ensure their effectiveness, and hold those who breached such rules to account. The United Kingdom was a responsible nuclear-weapon State that remained committed to pursuing all three, mutually reinforcing Treaty pillars.

157. The establishment of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, which was the result of the strengthened review process adopted in 1995, had been an unprecedented step. His country supported the full implementation of its recommendations and called on all States parties to continue working to that end. It was clear what they could achieve by working together, building trust and confidence among States.

158. The United Kingdom remained committed to article VI of the Treaty. It had a strong record on arms reductions, having cut the number of warheads on each deployed ballistic submarine, the number of operational missiles on each of those submarines, and the number of operationally available warheads. The most effective way to achieve multilateral disarmament was through a negotiated, step-by-step approach within existing frameworks. Progress was possible, as demonstrated by ongoing collective efforts on disarmament verification.

159. His country would continue to promote the universal implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, press for the entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and call for the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. However, the United Kingdom neither had nor would become party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and did not recognize it as representing an emerging rule of customary international law.

160. Since the implementation of the joint comprehensive plan of action, the United Kingdom had worked to ensure its success and expected all parties to continue to fully implement the deal. His country also called on the Islamic Republic of Iran to refrain from conducting ballistic missile launches in violation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), and from engaging in activities that destabilized the region.

161. The United Kingdom reaffirmed its commitment to the 1995 resolution, and to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and was prepared to support and facilitate renewed dialogue in that respect.

162. As global demand for reliable and sustainable energy grew, nuclear technology could play an increasing role in improving many people's lives. His country would therefore remain committed to the Treaty's pillar on nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

163. It was vital to keep in mind the far-sightedness embodied by the Treaty. States parties must continue to take steps towards achieving their long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons, prevent proliferation and uphold the right to develop civil nuclear technology. That depended on their coming together, even under difficult circumstances, to reaffirm their support for their shared norms and standards and hold to account those who threatened their security and prosperity.

164. **Ms. Korka** (Greece) said that the States parties must strive to preserve and strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. To that end, they must uphold the principle of

undiminished security for all in the context of the increasingly complex and challenging global security environment, and to give new impetus to both non-proliferation and progressive disarmament on the basis of a prudent and realistic approach. It was also essential to accelerate efforts to conclude a fissile material cut-off treaty and establish a nuclear disarmament verification framework.

165. The holistic approach that was needed to fulfil those objectives required dialogue among nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear weapon States with a view to significant reductions in nuclear arsenals, ultimately leading to complete nuclear disarmament. She therefore hoped that deliberations at the current session would serve to bridge divides and contribute to building a safer world.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

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Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Chair: Mr. Bugajski ..... (Poland)

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General debate on issues related to all aspects of the work of the Preparatory Committee (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

General debate on issues related to all aspects of the work of the Preparatory Committee (*continued*)

1. **Ms. Böhlke-Möller** (Namibia), speaking on behalf of the African Group, welcomed the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which complemented and reinforced States' commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the African Group sought the establishment of more comprehensive nuclear disarmament measures.

2. It was essential for all nuclear-weapon States to provide non-nuclear-weapon States with universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. She therefore welcomed and underscored the importance of General Assembly resolution 70/34 (2015) as an integral part of multilateral disarmament efforts.

3. Seven decades after the first-ever use of atomic bombs, the African Group questioned whether the world had learned lessons from its past. States needed to unite to ensure a world free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as envisaged in the very first resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, resolution 1 (I) of 1946. It was also necessary to speak out against the slow pace of nuclear disarmament and the lack of commitment shown by nuclear-weapon States to dismantling their nuclear weapons and ensuring that such weapons were never produced again.

4. She regretted the failure of States parties to reach consensus on a final document of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, despite delegations' efforts, and called on the nuclear weapon States to demonstrate the political will necessary to ensure the formulation of recommendations on nuclear disarmament at the 2020 Review Conference. As the continued existence of nuclear weapons posed a real threat to humanity, the commitments made by the nuclear-weapon States under the Treaty must be fulfilled.

5. Reaffirming the central role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in consolidating the Non-Proliferation Treaty, strengthening the non-proliferation regime and contributing to nuclear disarmament across all regions of the world, she said that the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba), the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga), the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (Treaty of Bangkok), the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia (Treaty of Semipalatinsk) and the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia made a significant contribution to the overall objective of a world free of nuclear weapons by enhancing global and regional peace and security. In that context, the African Group remained committed to the Treaty of Pelindaba.

6. The Group continued to be concerned by the lack of progress made in implementing the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, which was an integral part of the package of decisions agreed at that Conference and the basis upon which consensus had been reached on the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. That resolution would remain valid until its objectives had been fulfilled.

7. All States must comply with international law, including international humanitarian law. Any use of nuclear weapons was a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and a crime against humanity. The total elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they would never be produced again was the only unqualified assurance that could be given against the catastrophic humanitarian consequences arising from the use of such weapons. The continued existence and possession of nuclear weapons did not guarantee security, but instead confirmed the risk of their potential use. The world and outer space must be free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The nuclear-weapon States must stop modernizing, upgrading and extending the lives of their nuclear weapons and related facilities. She also stressed the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, and highlighted the special responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States in that regard. That Treaty had the potential to halt the further development, qualitative improvement and proliferation of nuclear weapons, thereby contributing to the goal of nuclear disarmament.

8. Lastly, she reaffirmed the importance of the work entrusted to the Conference on Disarmament and underscored that multilateral disarmament negotiations would achieve tangible results only with the necessary political will to support that process.

9. Speaking as the representative of Namibia, she said that the mutually reinforcing pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, namely, nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the right to

peaceful use of nuclear energy, were essential for strengthening international peace and security. Highlighting that the discussion of nuclear disarmament should remain a priority at the current session, she called on nuclear-weapon States to fully comply with their legal obligations and unequivocal undertakings to eliminate nuclear weapons without further delay and in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner.

10. The failure to reach consensus on a final document at the 2015 Review Conference was a reminder to all States to redouble their efforts and reaffirm their strong commitment to the Treaty in order to achieve a successful 2020 Review Conference.

11. Namibia remained a committed State party to the Treaty of Pelindaba and called for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. It was concerning that, despite the consensus reached at the 2010 Review Conference, such a zone had not yet been established.

12. The Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was essential in curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and advancing the goal of nuclear disarmament. It was important to strive for the entry into force of the Treaty, which would further strengthen the verification regime and thereby contribute significantly to international peace and security. She therefore called on the Annex II States to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay. She also welcomed the historic adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which would complement and strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty and which was soon to be ratified by Namibia.

13. Nuclear disarmament was of highest priority given the threat to humanity posed by the existence, testing and threat of use of nuclear weapons, and in light of the worrying lack of progress made by the nuclear-weapon States in complying with their relevant obligations and commitments. She called on those States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals in accordance with their obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty in order to overcome the current impasse. Reaffirming her country's support for the joint comprehensive plan of action, she also called on the parties to that agreement to comply fully with their commitments.

14. In view of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, all States must comply with the relevant provisions of international and humanitarian law and seek to promote international peace and security when implementing measures or initiatives in the area of nuclear disarmament.

15. She underscored the importance of the peaceful applications of nuclear technology for sustainable development and stressed that the technical cooperation and assistance provided by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to meet the needs of its Member States must not be subject to any conditions that were incompatible with the IAEA statute.

16. In conclusion, she highlighted that multilateral disarmament negotiations would achieve tangible results only if States could generate the necessary political will to support that process.

17. **Mr. Najafi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that success in maintaining the credibility and legitimacy of the Non-Proliferation Treaty depended on the attainment of its main objective of safeguarding the security of humanity by eliminating the threat posed by the world's most dangerous weapons. Despite being only two years away from the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force, States were no closer to achieving that objective owing to the actions and policies of nuclear-weapon States, particularly the United States of America. The nuclear-weapon States continued to retain thousands of nuclear weapons, emphasizing their value and in some cases increasing their role in national security and military doctrines. Certain States also continued to threaten to use such weapons against both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty. Others had embarked on a new nuclear arms race, modernizing their nuclear missiles and their delivery systems and developing new types of low-yield nuclear weapons for use in regional conflicts. The nuclear-weapon States had not engaged in negotiations on effective measures to achieve nuclear disarmament.

18. The non-nuclear weapon States categorically rejected attempts by certain States parties to attribute those negative trends and the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament to international security conditions, and believed the root causes of the current situation to be disregard for multilateralism; unwillingness to cooperate multilaterally and in good faith in negotiations on a legally binding instrument for the elimination of nuclear weapons; lack of political will to achieve nuclear disarmament; and persistent non-compliance with nuclear disarmament obligations.

19. Unilateralism, particularly the unilateral nuclear actions and policies of the United States, presented the gravest threat to the future of the Treaty and disarmament. That country was attempting in vain to convince States parties that in order to make progress on nuclear disarmament it was necessary to abandon existing commitments and instead create subjective conditions as preconditions for fulfilling disarmament obligations. The real intention of such a distorted

discourse was to make article VI of the Treaty a dead letter. The 2020 Review Conference must focus on the fulfilment of existing commitments relating to nuclear disarmament. Any final document should reaffirm the validity of the commitments made at previous review conferences and indicate the steps to be taken to implement article VI, including a call on all nuclear weapon States to participate as a matter of priority in negotiations on and the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention at the Conference on Disarmament.

20. While the exploitation by a few countries of the potential devastating impact of nuclear technology continued to pose the gravest threat to humanity, the peaceful applications of nuclear technology offered great benefits, which States parties could enjoy by exercising their inalienable right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and by fulfilling their commitments to facilitate the exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information. Although non-nuclear-weapon States had implemented comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols, they remained subject to various restrictive measures and initiatives that limited their ability to exercise their inalienable right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to participate in peaceful nuclear cooperation. All States parties had agreed at previous review conferences that preferential treatment should be given to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties in relation to all activities designed to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In practice, however, States that were not parties to the Treaty but that possessed nuclear weapons appeared to be receiving such preferential treatment. That issue should be addressed at future Preparatory Committee sessions and review conferences.

21. As a steadfast supporter of nuclear disarmament, the Islamic Republic of Iran was equally committed to non-proliferation and had been at the forefront of efforts to achieve the universality of the Treaty, particularly in the Middle East. The possession of nuclear weapons by the Israeli regime, which had a long and dark history of aggression, occupation and war crimes, posed a serious threat to the security of non-nuclear-weapon States in the Middle East and contributed to the global proliferation of those weapons. With the blind support of the United States, the Israeli regime continued to block all international and regional efforts to implement the 1995 resolution, in contravention of its international commitment to undertake all necessary measures aimed at that resolution's prompt implementation. The resolution had been an integral element of the outcome of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and constituted the basis on which the Treaty had been indefinitely extended without a vote. The States parties must bear in mind that the persistent failure to implement the resolution would have unintended consequences. The nuclear weapon programme of Israel was the result of the application of double standards by certain nuclear-weapon States, particularly the United States, and their failure to comply with and enforce the legally binding non-proliferation norm, which should be applied globally and without exception.

22. Iran remained committed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts despite the fabricated crisis of a few years ago, which had adversely affected not only his country but also global peace. That crisis had been overcome through painstaking negotiations resulting in the joint comprehensive plan of action, which was a success of multilateral diplomacy. The vital importance of that plan as a model for the resolution of technically and politically complex issues had been widely acknowledged and explained the international community's steadfast support for its implementation.

23. He called on the United States to fulfil its commitments under the plan. While Iran had complied with its own commitments, as confirmed by IAEA in its reports, the United States had continually violated the terms of the agreement, including through actions aimed at coercing other parties to renege on their undertakings. Such actions constituted not only the violation of a multilaterally negotiated deal but also of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). The United States administration had blatantly presented certain parties to the plan with an ultimatum for the one sided alteration of the deal's provisions, to which his country's response was clear and firm: the plan would not be renegotiated or altered. The United States would be held accountable for any consequences of its reckless policies, which sent an unambiguous message that the country was an unreliable and untrustworthy party in any bilateral or multilateral agreement.

24. For the review process to be successful, the status of implementation of all Treaty provisions should be assessed and reviewed in a balanced manner. However, the current stalemate with regard to nuclear disarmament could not be ignored. Greater attention must be paid to the urgent need to implement nuclear disarmament commitments. It was clear that the future of the Treaty depended primarily on the implementation of article VI by nuclear-weapon States. No effort should be spared in ensuring the full and effective implementation of the Treaty as the most effective means of preserving its credibility and longevity.

25. **Mr. Baddoura** (Lebanon) said that his country was committed to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and greatly valued the principles on which it was based. He called on States parties to respect its provisions and abide by all decisions reached at previous review conferences. The Treaty, which was the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, must be universally implemented given the benefits it offered with regard to international peace and security. The Treaty's credibility and effectiveness depended on the equal treatment and balanced implementation of its pillars. However, in spite of a number of positive initiatives, progress in the field of nuclear disarmament continued to be lacking, despite the fact that article VI obligated nuclear-weapon States to pursue disarmament.

26. Although eight years had passed since the 2010 Review Conference, the recommendations of the Conference relating to nuclear disarmament had not yet been implemented. The existence of nuclear weapons that were ready to be deployed at any time could destroy the world, and there appeared to be little hope that there would be a reduction in their numbers or any serious initiatives to lower their operational status in the near future. Unfortunately, nuclear weapons and justifications for their use played a significant role in the military doctrines of certain States. Huge sums continued to be invested in modernizing existing nuclear arms and their delivery systems and in developing new tactical nuclear weapons.

27. It was regrettable that the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had not yet entered into force and that the Committee on Disarmament had not yet been able to make progress on negative security assurances or negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (fissile material cut-off treaty). The States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, particularly nuclear-weapon States, must take those elements into consideration and seek to ensure the success of the 2020 Review Conference by adopting a more transparent approach and taking new initiatives to advance nuclear disarmament efforts. The current heightened level of conflict in several regions was being used as an excuse to avoid implementing article VI, a fact that created mistrust and polarization, leading to the exchange of accusations and thus to an increased risk of tensions and the possibility of an arms race or even more dire consequences.

28. He emphasized the importance of the Treaty's non-proliferation pillar, including with respect to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, an area in which activities could not easily be pursued without non-proliferation mechanisms in place. IAEA remained the only international body responsible for monitoring safeguards and conducting verification activities. The comprehensive safeguards agreement was the sole legal framework for verifying the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, whereas the additional protocol, while important, was only a voluntary mechanism.

29. Diplomacy, based on constructive dialogue, was the most effective means of de-escalating proliferation-related crises, as evidenced by the joint comprehensive plan of action. He called on all States concerned to fulfil their obligations under the plan, which would benefit all States and promote stability in the Middle East. He also called on States to cease politicizing and applying double standards with respect to the issue of non-proliferation, as such conduct only made the situation more complex, as evidenced by the failure of the international community to implement the 1995 resolution. It was essential for States parties to succeed, at the 2020 Review Conference, in adopting a clear mechanism for the implementation of that resolution, as it had been a key factor in securing the indefinite extension of the Treaty. The continued failure to implement it could undermine the Treaty's credibility and negatively affect the entire non-proliferation regime.

30. Despite repeated calls by the international community, the nuclear material and activities of Israel remained outside the scope of the Treaty. That country had not placed its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards and was unwilling to engage in serious negotiations on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The continuing ambiguity in respect of its military nuclear programme was cause for serious concern, and the international community's failure to hold Israel accountable for its actions diminished prospects for peace in the Middle East and condemned those living in the region to the continued threat of proliferation and nuclear war.

31. Underscoring the inalienable right of the States parties to benefit from nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, he expressed appreciation for the role of IAEA in placing nuclear energy at the service of peoples and their development. In that regard, the resources of the Agency's Technical Cooperation Fund must be sufficient, guaranteed and predictable. The 2020 Review Conference should support the right of States parties to access the peaceful uses of nuclear energy without discrimination, through the exchange of scientific materials and information and continued multilateral cooperation. In that respect, the Nuclear Suppliers Group should improve guidelines on expert controls and bring them into line with Treaty principles, and should move away from politicization and selectivity.

Furthermore, the Review Conference should adopt recommendations on measures to strengthen the international nuclear security and safety framework.

32. He hoped for a successful outcome to the 2020 Review Conference, which would build confidence and dispel the perception that inequality was inherent in the Treaty. With equal rights and obligations, the States parties would be able to cooperate in building a better world.

33. **Mr. Aala** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Syrian Arab Republic had been one of the first States to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, recognizing at the time of its accession the grave threat posed by nuclear weapons to international and regional peace and security. His country continued to respect its obligations under the Treaty and to comply with its comprehensive safeguards agreement in full cooperation with IAEA. He rejected attempts by certain States to politicize issues and apply double standards. It was important not to confuse legal obligations with voluntary measures, as highlighted by the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference.

34. Expressing hope that progress towards the objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty could be achieved at the current session, he called for the universalization of the Treaty in order to preserve its credibility, especially in the Middle East; the balanced consideration of issues relating to non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament; and confirmation of the inalienable right of States parties to access nuclear technology for peaceful uses, in accordance with article IV of the Treaty.

35. Twenty-three years after the adoption of the 1995 resolution, there was still no sign of progress in its implementation, particularly as some States parties continued to avoid their obligations and hamper any initiatives in that regard. All States of the Middle East except Israel had demonstrated their willingness to take practical steps towards the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, while Israel, with the full support of its allies, namely the United States and the United Kingdom, continued to refuse to accede to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

36. In view of the failure to convene a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, and the failure of the 2015 Review Conference to adopt a final document, he reiterated that the creation of such a zone was an integral part of States parties' obligations under the Treaty. He therefore called on all States parties to fulfil their obligations. The 1995 resolution would remain valid until its objectives were achieved and its provisions fully implemented. The benchmark for measuring the success of the 2020 Review Conference would be the implementation of that resolution and the full commitment of all States parties to the creation of such a zone in the Middle East.

37. The claims that his country was not cooperating with IAEA were unfounded. The Agency continued to support technical projects on public health and the environment and conducted regular verification activities in the country, despite the challenging conditions. Some States also continued to allege that the Syrian Arab Republic was failing to cooperate fully with regard to the nature of the Dayr al-Zawr military installation that had been attacked by Israel. However, those allegations ran counter to the fact that the Agency's findings had not been the subject of consensus among member States as they had been based on approximations and lacked material evidence. It was also clear to all which State had impeded, for the benefit of its own political agenda, the implementation of the agreement signed with IAEA in October 2011 to settle all pending issues regarding the site. Noting that Israel had recently admitted responsibility for the attack, he called on States to condemn that country's aggression and encourage it to cooperate with the Agency to confirm the source of uranium pollution found at the site.

38. With regard to statements that had been made regarding the use of chemical weapons, he called on the European Union, France, Germany and the United States to cease their politicized campaigns and respect the legal frameworks governing the mandate and discussions of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, and not to confuse the two.

39. States could not preserve the non-proliferation regime by using false accusations as a pretext for launching military attacks, which violated the Charter of the United Nations and diverted attention from fundamental issues, most notably, the need to universally implement the Treaty and create a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. States must call on Israel to accede to the Treaty, place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards without conditions or delay and eliminate its nuclear capacities, which were not subject to international monitoring, rather than using the review process as a means of politicizing issues and unobjectively applying double standards.

40. **Mr. Bucheeri** (Bahrain) said that his country would continue to play a positive role in international efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and would actively participate in all relevant multilateral forums. The acquisition, possession, development and stockpiling of nuclear weapons represented a serious threat to international peace and security. The best way of overcoming that threat was the complete elimination of such weapons without preconditions. That was the litmus test for the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

41. It was regrettable that, despite significant efforts and good intentions, the 2015 Review Conference had failed. As nuclear weapon States were avoiding fulfilling their nuclear disarmament-related commitments, all States must assume their collective responsibility and redouble their efforts to accelerate the implementation of practical steps and measures for the elimination of nuclear weapons. They had a moral duty to overcome their differences and focus on the many areas of common ground.

42. Faced with the lack of progress on the action plan contained in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference, Bahrain had put forward various proposals in order to overcome the stagnation of the review process. Despite receiving the support of all States parties, the excellent initiative presented in the working paper of the Arab Group at the 2015 Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2015/WP.34) had been shelved, thereby preventing the achievement of international consensus and the conclusion of a final document providing for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, responsibility for which was multilateral and unavoidable.

43. Bahrain shared the position that the failure to hold a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction ran counter to the review process and constituted a violation of agreed obligations. He hoped that that such failure to seize historical opportunities would not be repeated at future review conferences. The Treaty's objectives could not be fulfilled unless all States acceded to the Treaty and implemented it in full. Delays and complacency would only undermine the non-proliferation regime. He therefore called on the international community to mobilize its efforts and take a positive step towards the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East, pursuant to the 1995 resolution. States could achieve a historic breakthrough and agree on a consensus-based workplan at the 2020 Review Conference if they fully complied with their obligations and avoided dwelling on past failed attempts.

44. **Mr. Boukili** (Morocco) said that the current session coincided with a period of mistrust of the basic principles of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The danger posed by nuclear weapons was only too clear and the significant global concern over the threat of nuclear war was entirely justified.

45. The nuclear powers continued not only to modernize their nuclear arsenals, but also to develop new generations of nuclear weapons, and to assign them a prominent role in their military and security doctrines in violation of the letter and spirit of the Treaty. Moreover, the paralysis of the Conference on Disarmament remained a source of frustration, given its inability to agree on a balanced and consensus-based work programme for the negotiation of international instruments on nuclear disarmament, fissile material, negative security assurances and the prevention of the militarization of outer space.

46. Nevertheless, there had been positive signs in recent months, including the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; the decision to convene a high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament in May 2018; the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts to examine the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament; the establishment of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons; the decision by the Conference on Disarmament to establish five subsidiary bodies to conduct substantive discussions and broaden areas of convergence; and the diplomatic momentum triggered by the decision by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to suspend its nuclear tests. It was necessary to capitalize on those achievements and take advantage of that momentum in order to work towards the achievement of the Non-Proliferation Treaty's objectives.

47. The balance between the Treaty's pillars could be maintained only through the balanced and universal application of all the provisions of the Treaty, which remained the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime. For that reason, Morocco had always supported initiatives to strengthen the authority of that regime, promote the universality of the Treaty and promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology.

48. The indefinite extension of the Treaty had put an end to the uncertainties surrounding the nuclear non-proliferation regime by giving it permanent status. However, the failure of the previous review conference, the lack of tangible progress on nuclear disarmament and the failure to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone

in the Middle East all highlighted the threat faced by that regime.

49. Despite the challenges, there was no questioning the significance of the Treaty and the need to redouble efforts to maintain its strength and credibility, including through the implementation of concrete measures to ensure compliance with its provisions and the decisions taken over the past four decades by its States parties.

50. The Treaty was based on a careful balance of rights and obligations. The credibility of the non-proliferation regime depended on respect for that balance, the compliance of all States with their commitments and their Treaty obligations and the transparent, balanced and irreversible implementation of the outcomes of the 1995 and 2010 review conferences. Unfortunately, it was clear that the main objectives established at those review conferences had not been achieved, leading to a further loss of confidence among States in the regime's relevance, which had become more acute following the failure of the 2015 Review Conference.

51. Efforts in the area of multilateral nuclear disarmament had been insufficient, as evidenced by the absence of certain key players from the process to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had not yet entered into force, despite having been adopted more than 20 years previously.

52. The long-awaited negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime had not yet begun. In addition, no tangible progress had been made on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In that regard, it was important to recall the decisions of the 2000 and 2010 review conferences, which had clearly affirmed the importance of the accession by Israel to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the placement by that country of all nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards as a necessary step towards the establishment of such a zone. The implementation of the 1995 resolution would prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in that vulnerable region and establish peace and security there. The credibility of the Treaty rested on the ability of States parties, including the depositary States, to take measures to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, which was still relevant, contained the elements necessary to guide States parties through that process in a spirit of mutual respect and inclusivity.

53. Noting that the universality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty had yet to be achieved, he called on the international community to involve those States that were not yet parties in efforts to consolidate global peace and security through nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

54. He reaffirmed his country's commitment to the inalienable right of States parties to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy and technology for peaceful purposes, particularly through international cooperation activities supervised by IAEA. Any attempt to establish preconditions for the exercise of that right was contrary to the letter and spirit of the Treaty and the IAEA statute.

55. It was necessary to increase access to nuclear energy through appropriate international cooperation in the transfer of technology and the sharing of nuclear knowledge for peaceful purposes. Nuclear energy had enabled some countries to overcome their energy dependency and remained a goal for all States aspiring to sustainable development. The IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme played a key role in assisting its member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of the Paris Agreement. It was therefore important to provide IAEA with the necessary support to ensure that all States parties had access to nuclear technology, the development of which had extended to such diverse areas as energy, health, water, agriculture and the environment, especially as the solutions to problems posed by the scarcity of natural resources and climate change could be found in the safe and secure use of nuclear applications.

56. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his country's readiness to work with all States parties to universalize the Non-Proliferation Treaty and ensure full compliance with its provisions in order to uphold the ideal of a nuclear-weapon-free world and to realize the principle of "atoms for peace".

57. **Ms. Martinavičiūtė** (Lithuania) underscored the need for full implementation of article VI and the reduction of both strategic and non-strategic arsenals of deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons. She expected the nuclear weapon States to exercise leadership in that regard, and the non-nuclear-weapon States to comply with their Treaty obligations and comprehensive safeguards agreements and to strive to reinforce the non-proliferation regime.

58. As a member State of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Lithuania supported the core principle of that Organization's posture that all nuclear-weapon States of the alliance maintained full control and custody of their nuclear weapons. The nuclear arrangements of NATO had already been in place at the time of the Treaty's negotiation and entry into force,

with the primary objective of preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons and preserving peace.

59. It was regrettable that conditions were unfavourable for achieving disarmament without compromising security and international stability. Her country continued to support an operable protocol for achieving nuclear disarmament through a continuous, practical and systematic approach within the existing framework of complementary treaties, institutions and commitments in support of achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons. Owing to the fragility of the current geopolitical environment, it was necessary to remain realistic. It was doubtful that the delegitimization of nuclear weapons would contribute to global security, stability and overall disarmament objectives.

60. Recognizing the value placed by many States parties on access to the benefits of peaceful nuclear energy, she supported their right to develop peaceful nuclear energy within a framework that reduced the risk of proliferation and adhered to international safeguards standards. Nuclear security could not be upheld independently of nuclear safety; both must be addressed in a coordinated and consistent manner. Consistency with IAEA safety standards, an advanced culture of safety, transparency and respect for the legitimate interests of neighbouring countries and international law were of key importance in that regard.

61. **Ms. Castillo Castro** (Colombia) said that, since the entry into force of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the objective of her country's foreign policy had been to promote general and complete disarmament in a transparent and sustained manner. The only assurance against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, particularly considering the devastating effects that their use would have on humanity, was the prohibition of their production and the elimination of existing arsenals.

62. Colombia had striven to promote the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the universalization of the Treaty. She hoped that those efforts would contribute to a safer world in which peace was built through full cooperation and confidence-building measures. The best way for States to address international security challenges was by working in a coordinated and constructive manner to establish and strengthen channels of communication and cooperation between governments, law enforcement agencies, civil society and academia in all countries.

63. The current session provided nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States with the opportunity to work together to strengthen and effectively implement the Treaty. It was essential to convene, as a matter of priority, an international conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which would make a significant contribution to international peace and security, as such zones would eventually lead to general and complete disarmament. As demonstrated by the Treaty of Tlatelolco, nuclear-weapon-free zones promoted regional peace and stability. The creation of such zones in densely populated areas were a triumph of multilateralism. She therefore hoped that a nuclear-weapon-free zone could be established in the Middle East.

64. She called on all States that had not signed and ratified the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty to do so. All States, particularly the Annex 2 States, should take accession and adherence to that Treaty as an opportunity to demonstrate their political will and commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation. The entry into force and universal implementation of the Test-Ban Treaty would be a concrete outcome of multilateralism that would revitalize efforts to curb the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons.

65. Similarly, active and verifiable compliance with article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty would allow States to effectively observe their international commitments within that framework. During the 2020 Review Conference, it was essential for nuclear weapon States to demonstrate progress in fulfilling their nuclear disarmament commitments made at the 2010 Review Conference. Colombia also hoped to see concrete results in the reduction of existing nuclear arsenals as a step towards their total elimination, a reduction in the role and importance of nuclear weapons in national security doctrines, the exploration of additional means of achieving the elimination of nuclear weapons, a reduction in the risk of accidental detonation of such weapons and the promotion of transparency and mutual trust.

66. Until complete nuclear disarmament was achieved, the nuclear weapon States must provide the non-nuclear-weapon States with assurances that they would not use or threaten to use such weapons against them. For that reason, it was of great importance to make progress in the negotiation of a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances.

67. Efforts to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime were particularly useful in reducing the risks inherent in nuclear weapons, increasing international stability and creating the necessary conditions for preventing nuclear confrontation.

68. Colombia hoped that the 2020 Review Conference would yield results different from those of the 2015 Review Conference. It was essential for the 2020 Review Conference to adopt a consensus document that established commitments and concrete actions in respect of disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. To that end, Colombia was committed to working resolutely towards the achievement in 2020 of a new milestone in the promotion of nuclear disarmament and general compliance with the commitments made upon ratification of the Treaty.

69. Through the promotion of science and technology, the third Treaty pillar had produced tangible results in areas as diverse as energy, industry and health. It exemplified the way in which international regimes could successfully operate to bring benefits to the citizens of the world. Colombia invited countries to continue cooperating in research and development to increase confidence in and enhance the benefits of the use of nuclear materials while guaranteeing the safety of their facilities and ensuring technological progress.

70. **Ms. Flores Liera** (Mexico) said that the current session was taking place in a complex international context characterized by significant security challenges and uncertainties that would have been unthinkable a few decades earlier. In the words of the Secretary-General, the Cold War was back, but with a difference, and the mechanisms and safeguards to manage the risks of escalation that had existed in the past no longer seemed to be present.

71. The renewed interest in the role of nuclear weapons in military doctrines was of particular concern, as was the return to a nuclear arms race, which was in clear contravention of the non-proliferation regime and for which there could be no justification, particularly when the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear attack were clearer than ever. Such an attack would be a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law.

72. The so-called "humanitarian initiative" and the conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons held in Oslo, Nayarit in Mexico and Vienna had led to a better understanding of that humanitarian impact, and constituted a solid basis on which to redouble efforts towards nuclear disarmament as a matter of urgency. As stated by the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki moon, there were no right hands that could handle those wrong weapons. It was for that reason that 122 countries had adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which strengthened and complemented the existing non-proliferation and disarmament regime and contributed to the implementation of article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

73. Disarmament and non-proliferation were mutually reinforcing processes. Compliance with the Treaty was neither subject to any conditions nor optional, and would ensure a safer, more stable world. The States parties must make every possible effort to implement the Treaty's legally binding provisions. She called on all States not yet parties, particularly those with nuclear weapons, to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States. It was incumbent upon all parties to strengthen and ensure the credibility of the Treaty, and to work towards its universality.

74. She hoped that during the current review cycle, States parties could focus their efforts on strengthening compliance with the obligations set out in the Treaty and in the agreements made in the package of decisions of 1995, the 1995 resolution, the thirteen steps and the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference.

75. Mexico had unequivocally condemned the flagrant violation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of international law and Security Council resolutions. The recent announcement that that country was going to halt its nuclear programme and intercontinental ballistic missile tests was encouraging. She hoped that the announcement would lead to the total denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and peace and stability in the region.

76. At the current session, it was vital to bolster dialogue, trust and compliance with international law. Mexico stood ready to work towards strengthening the Treaty, and invited all parties to join efforts to achieve that objective. The States parties had worked together to build a legal framework by consensus; it was important not to weaken that framework, question it or justify any failure to uphold it.

77. **Mr. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that his country had acceded to all treaties and conventions on weapons of mass destruction and internationally prohibited weapons. Qatar had also made tireless efforts to establish national legislation to implement its obligations arising from those treaties and conventions, including a law on export controls on nuclear material and on how to handle such material so as to prevent it from falling into the hands of criminal groups.

78. The complex international situation was deteriorating as a result of the fact that many States now believed in the importance of nuclear weapons in military doctrines, thus increasing the possibility of a nuclear crisis. That negative development required multilateral diplomacy and steps to reduce tension and

restore confidence in international action to achieve peace and security, most notably in the areas of nuclear disarmament and arms control.

79. Although 50 years had passed since the conclusion of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and despite the efforts of the United Nations, States were far from achieving tangible progress in implementing the Treaty's pillars owing to the instrument's discriminatory nature. In recent times, nuclear-weapon States had increased their efforts to develop nuclear weapons rather than dismantle them, leading the international community to further highlight the danger posed by those weapons, including through the three conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. Qatar was one of the States that had endorsed the pledge presented by Austria at the 2014 Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons (the Humanitarian Pledge), and cooperated with all relevant stakeholders in order to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons and establish a world free of such weapons.

80. With regard to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, Qatar affirmed the importance of developing peaceful nuclear energy programmes in line with comprehensive safeguards agreements to ensure that countries applied the highest nuclear safety and security standards.

81. He expressed the hope that the 2020 Review Conference would focus on, and lead to, the total elimination of nuclear weapons as the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons.

82. **Ms. Williams-Maluk** (South Africa) said that her country remained convinced that nuclear weapons undermined security. As long as such weapons existed and vertical and horizontal proliferation persisted, the world would continue to face the threat of annihilation. The retention of nuclear weapons served as a catalyst for further proliferation. Recent developments on the Korean Peninsula clearly illustrated that the threat of the use of nuclear weapons was not only real, but also imminent.

83. South Africa had repeatedly stated that the Non-Proliferation Treaty represented an historic agreement between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States under which the former had undertaken to eliminate their nuclear weapons on the basis of the reciprocal undertaking by the latter not to pursue the nuclear option. The honouring of that agreement was therefore central to the Treaty's integrity, and would enable the Treaty to remain the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

84. The 2010 Review Conference had reaffirmed the continued validity of the outcomes of the 1995 and 2000 review conferences, particularly the unequivocal commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals and abide by the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability in fulfilment of Treaty obligations. Those commitments, including the commitments set out in the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, would remain valid until fulfilled. Nevertheless, the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference had failed to dispel the serious concerns of most States parties with regard to the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament. For that reason, the success of the 2020 Review Conference would be determined by the extent to which the nuclear-weapon States honoured their commitments.

85. The limited progress made on nuclear disarmament since 2010 was regrettable. While a reduction in nuclear arsenals was important, it was no substitute for concrete, transparent, irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament measures. Ongoing modernization programmes, including in relation to delivery systems, clearly showed that some States wished to retain their weapons indefinitely, in breach of their legal obligations and political commitments, thus undermining the Treaty and its non-proliferation provisions. She therefore welcomed the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which represented one of the most important developments in the area of nuclear weapons since 1945. It filled a key legal gap in international law on weapons of mass destruction by explicitly prohibiting nuclear weapons, and would complement and strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty, particularly its article VI.

86. The strengthened safeguards system remained an essential element of collective efforts to address the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Those strengthened safeguards would contribute to establishing confidence in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which, in turn, would greatly facilitate the transfer of nuclear technology and the use of nuclear energy for the benefit of developing countries. South Africa therefore maintained its principled position that States parties must conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements as required under the Treaty, while viewing the additional protocol as an indispensable instrument that enabled the Agency to provide credible assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities from a State.

87. She welcomed the progress made in implementing the joint comprehensive plan of action and called on all parties involved to continue fulfilling their obligations under the agreement. She also supported the

establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in the Middle East. Such zones enhanced global and regional peace and security, strengthened the non-proliferation regime and contributed to nuclear disarmament objectives. The 1995 resolution was an integral part of the package of decisions that had enabled the indefinite extension of the Treaty. Although the 2010 Review Conference had agreed on specific actions to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, there had been no tangible results. South Africa therefore urged all States to redouble their efforts to convene a conference on that important issue, with the participation of all States of the region, without further delay.

88. Tensions between key members of the Security Council were of particular concern. The situation was reminiscent of the Cold War era, but the current danger, as expressed by the Secretary-General, was that States did not have the dialogue and communication mechanisms that had existed during that period.

89. South Africa condemned the nuclear tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Current tensions on the Korean Peninsula clearly illustrated that neither the pursuit nor the possession of nuclear weapons could bring about increased security. In an increasingly interconnected world, global threats frequently transcended national borders. That phenomenon required enhanced international cooperation and strong international institutions that could respond to collective security concerns. She welcomed current plans for an inter-Korean summit and a summit between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States as a positive step towards a return to negotiations. It was only through negotiation that a sustainable solution could be found that would bring peace and security to the region. She also welcomed the statement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it would not conduct any further tests.

90. Article IV of the Treaty was of particular relevance to Africa given the need for adequate energy supplies to fuel sustainable and accelerated economic growth on the continent. Her country's approach to nuclear energy was based on the fact that peaceful nuclear cooperation and access to the benefits of nuclear energy were integral components of the Treaty. Many countries were increasingly recognizing nuclear energy as a viable, reliable and clean option to meet their growing energy demands, particularly in view of the challenges of climate change.

91. In conclusion, she reiterated her country's support for the full and universal implementation of the Treaty as a means of achieving the common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. The strength, credibility and vitality of the Treaty rested on a fundamental commitment to its pillars, which must be recognized and upheld.

92. **Mr. Valero Briceño** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his country endorsed the Final Document of the eighteenth Mid-Term Ministerial Meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, in which the Movement repeated its condemnation of and opposition to the adoption by certain States of the doctrine of pre-emptive attacks, including nuclear weapon attacks, which constituted acts of aggression and blatant violations of the Charter of the United Nations. Moreover, he highlighted the reference in that Document to the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in accordance with the commitments undertaken during the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and subsequent meetings.

93. His country's Constitution promoted nuclear disarmament and cooperation among States, and declared the country's territory to be a zone of peace, which was evidence of its deep-seated pacifism. He highlighted the international community's political commitment to prohibiting and completely eliminating nuclear weapons in the light of the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which made an effective contribution to international peace and security. Through its "peace-based diplomacy", Venezuela supported the principles of international law as a means of maintaining international peace and security. It upheld the principle of general, complete and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament, as demonstrated by the fact that it had been the seventh country to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

94. He expressed support for the designation by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States of Latin America and the Caribbean as a peace zone, which was a significant contribution by the region to nuclear disarmament and international peace and security. The region was the first to have been declared free of nuclear weapons, under the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

95. The world was facing new threats and challenges, including the stagnation of multilateral diplomacy in the area of disarmament, the accelerated development and modernization of nuclear weapons and the possibility of acquisition of such weapons by terrorist groups. The disastrous consequences for humankind of the misuse,

unauthorized use or intentional use of nuclear weapons were no longer hypothetical. Such use would have irreversible, catastrophic and far-reaching consequences areas and threaten very survival of humanity. The nuclear-weapon States were responsible for adopting measures to reduce and eliminate their nuclear arsenals in accordance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

96. His country recognized the importance of that Treaty as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The progress made at review conferences must be maintained. However, although 50 years had passed since the signing of the Treaty, States were far from achieving its objectives because of a lack of political will on the part of nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligations. On the contrary, some States continued to justify the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons on the basis of unacceptable notions regarding international security, which were based on the promotion of nuclear deterrence policies. The development of nuclear and missile technologies was one of the greatest challenges to the non-proliferation regime. For that reason, he called on all States parties to step up efforts to prevent the development of nuclear weapons for the purposes of warmongering.

97. Reiterating the importance of the balanced implementation of the Treaty's pillars to promote the interests of all humankind, he called on the international community to face the challenges posed by the possession of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems by terrorist groups and non-State actors without delay or double standards.

98. Nuclear energy must be used for the good of humankind. Accordingly, he called for the general and complete eradication of nuclear weapons as the only assurance against the danger they posed to the survival of the planet. He appealed to all States that were not parties to the Treaty to commit to using nuclear energy and technology for peaceful purposes only. In that regard, his country supported the efforts made by IAEA to promote assistance and international cooperation.

99. It was possible to guarantee international peace and security only if genuine efforts were made to achieve nuclear disarmament. Regional and global measures were thus needed in order to promote confidence. He reaffirmed his country's commitment to the implementation of the Treaty as a means of strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Positive steps were needed in order to reach agreement on substantive elements relating to the Treaty's implementation.

100. **Mr. Foo** (Singapore) said that the legitimacy and relevance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty had been severely challenged in recent years, particularly by the failure of the States parties to adopt a final document at the 2015 Review Conference, the slow pace of nuclear disarmament by nuclear-weapon States — and indeed in some cases the modernization of existing nuclear arsenals — and the stalled progress in the convening of a conference to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. It was therefore no surprise that mistrust between nuclear weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States had deepened since the 2015 Review Conference. Furthermore, the exercise of the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy remained challenging, in particular for developing countries. The Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had not yet entered into force, and the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons had raised questions about the impact of that new treaty on the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Moreover, the current session was taking place at a time when the current global geopolitical and security situation had become more complex and challenging.

101. He urged nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their disarmament commitments under article VI of the Treaty and the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference and to continue engaging in meaningful dialogue to build trust, thus creating the conditions conducive to future nuclear disarmament negotiations.

102. The entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was long overdue. He called on all States that had not yet signed and ratified that Treaty, particularly the Annex 2 States, to do so. Pending the Treaty's entry into force, all States should refrain from any action that contravened the object and purpose of the Treaty, including the conduct of nuclear explosions. He also hoped to see progress in negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty by the Conference on Disarmament and through the discussions of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group. He remained concerned by threats to the nuclear non-proliferation regime, including those posed by non-State actors, which could undermine international peace and security.

103. Noting that the IAEA safeguards verification regime played a critical role in the implementation of non-proliferation obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, he called on all States parties that had not yet concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols to do so.

104. He welcomed the resumption of inter-Korean talks and the high-level talks between the Democratic

People's Republic of Korea, the United States and China, and hoped that those developments would create favourable conditions leading to peace and stability and the eventual denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. He also urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully comply with its obligations under all relevant Security Council resolutions and to return to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Singapore took seriously its obligations under the Security Council resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and would continue to fulfil them diligently. It had also continued to step up its counter-proliferation efforts.

105. Recalling that the joint comprehensive plan of action had been implemented for more than two years and that IAEA had verified the implementation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of its nuclear-related commitments, he welcomed that country's continued provisional application of the additional protocol to its safeguards agreement, pending its entry into force. The unravelling of the plan would undermine the nuclear non-proliferation regime and multilateralism at a broader level. He therefore urged all relevant parties to remain committed to the plan and to continue honouring their related undertakings. He also called on the Islamic Republic of Iran to continue its full cooperation with IAEA on all issues related to its safeguards commitments, thus reassuring the international community of the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme.

106. Singapore supported the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as part of regional efforts to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world, and was pleased to note that 2018 marked the twenty-first anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty of Bangkok. He expressed regret that the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction had not been convened, and called on all parties to work together to break the stalemate.

107. Singapore supported the right of all States parties to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technology. It also strongly supported and had contributed to the IAEA "Atoms for Peace and Development" mandate and its Technical Cooperation Programme to help developing countries to achieve their developmental targets, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals. The responsible development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology must, however, be carried out safely and securely. Singapore therefore supported the Agency's programmes and activities to strengthen the international nuclear safety and security regime.

108. Despite the challenges, the Non-Proliferation Treaty remained the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. Since States would ultimately bear the consequences if the Treaty lost its relevance and credibility, they should spare no effort in preserving and strengthening it and work towards its universalization. The Preparatory Committee sessions leading to the 2020 Review Conference provided States with the opportunity to renew their commitment to such efforts. He hoped that all States parties could engage with each other constructively and in a spirit of cooperation at the current session, thus enhancing the prospects for a successful and substantive outcome to the 2020 Review Conference, which would be a fitting way to mark the Treaty's fiftieth anniversary.

109. **Ms. Masana García** (Peru) said that Peru had maintained a long tradition of commitment to all multilateral efforts to achieve peace, disarmament and the strengthening of international security. It supported all initiatives aimed at general and complete disarmament, giving priority to the prohibition and total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. It was in that context that Peru had been one of the first States to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, in recognition of the unsustainability of the status quo and with the conviction that it was a moral imperative to address the international community's call for a world free of weapons of mass destruction, especially considering that the Treaty complemented and strengthened the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

110. Recognizing that the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was an essential instrument within the international non-proliferation regime, she called for universal adherence to its provisions and its early entry into force, to which end it was crucial that all Annex 2 States subscribed to or ratified that Treaty without further delay. She also urged those States that were not yet parties to the Treaty to refrain from conducting nuclear tests, developing or using new nuclear weapon technologies and carrying out any act that violated the Treaty's purpose and objectives.

111. Peru was deeply concerned by the reaffirmation of the role of and importance assigned by some States to nuclear weapons in their national defence and security doctrines, which was incompatible with the objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and contradicted the commitments made under the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference. The recent escalation in tensions could lead to a new arms race that threatened humanity, which in turn would divert efforts aimed at fulfilling the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. She urged all States parties to be aware

of the catastrophic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, which transcended national borders and violated human rights and international humanitarian law, having serious repercussions for human survival, the environment, socioeconomic development, the world economy, food security and the health of current and future generations.

112. Peru recognized the value of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and its contribution to peace and international security, and was proud to be a part of the first densely populated zone free of nuclear weapons. She regretted that it had not been possible to hold a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Given that the establishment of such a zone would represent an important step towards peace in the region, she called for that conference be held as soon as possible.

113. The implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty must be addressed in a joint and balanced manner. Furthermore, it was essential to strengthen the IAEA safeguards system. She hoped that all States would sign an addition protocol, an instrument that must be continually updated and reinforced.

114. Peru was greatly interested in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, particularly the principle of international cooperation in the development of nuclear energy, as it had benefited from such cooperation in various other fields. Technical cooperation should therefore be increased so that States could take maximum advantage of the potential of nuclear energy for civilian purposes.

115. **Mr. Al Rahbi** (Oman) said that his country's accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty clearly demonstrated its commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It would continue to participate in all international forums dedicated to nuclear disarmament until the ultimate goal of the total eradication of nuclear weapons had been attained, in order to achieve international peace and prevent human catastrophe. The best way to prevent the threat of nuclear weapons was to completely eliminate them. The credibility of the Treaty was based on its pillars, which should be implemented in a balanced manner. For that reason, the nuclear-weapon States must fulfil their international commitments and work towards eliminating their nuclear arsenals, while making the universality of the Treaty a key priority.

116. Oman supported the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. While it shared the concerns of nuclear-weapon States regarding the possibility of a nuclear arms race, it was confident that the Treaty complemented, rather than undermined, the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In that context, it supported the results of the three conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, which had highlighted the gravity of the threat posed by those weapons.

117. Noting that the main reason for the failure of the 2015 Review Conference was the lack of political will of some States parties, he called on all States not to backtrack on their obligations but to fulfil their commitments and redouble their efforts to eliminate nuclear arsenals. His country gave particular priority to the issue of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons, in accordance with the 1995 resolution, which would remain valid until it was fully implemented, and he called on the countries that had sponsored that resolution to continue their support and implement all other relevant resolutions.

118. The objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty could not be met until universality had been achieved through the adherence of both nuclear weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States to the Treaty. Any delay or procrastination was a serious obstacle to the non-proliferation regime. He therefore called on the international community, particularly one of the depositary States, to exert pressure on Israel to accede to the Treaty and place its facilities under comprehensive safeguards.

119. In conclusion, he reaffirmed that all States should have the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The exercise of that right was essential for States' sustainable development, which could be facilitated though IAEA technical assistance programmes.

120. **Mr. Azeez** (Sri Lanka) said that the current session would build on the diverse topics of discussion that had emerged from the Preparatory Commission's previous session, and would help advance the Non-Proliferation Treaty agenda. It was imperative that efforts were focused on ensuring that the 2020 Review Conference would lead to a consensus outcome that prompted action on the commitments made at the 1995 Review Conference. Securing a world free of nuclear weapons should remain the highest priority.

121. The general and comprehensive elimination of all nuclear weapons remained the ultimate goal, the achievement of which required progressive steps. In reality, however, there was a pronounced lack of political will to advance in that area. Instead, there had been an increasing tendency to seek refuge behind terminology such as "incremental approach", "step-by-step approach" and "progressive realization". A stage had been reached in the peace and security discourse

where such terminology no longer had any practical value or meaning. Any serious, concerted efforts towards the adoption of a comprehensive package at the 2020 Review Conference must be bolstered by the reaffirmation of a clear commitment by all parties to the Treaty's obligations and principles.

122. He reiterated the importance of the Treaty as constituting a global non-proliferation and disarmament regime that ensured a balanced and non-discriminatory approach to building international peace and security while safeguarding countries' prospects for economic development through equal access to technology for the advancement of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Sri Lanka supported all efforts towards achieving the universalization of the Treaty as the legal regime that enjoyed the participation of the largest number of United Nations Member States, including the five permanent members of the Council. It also supported the call for the full range of IAEA safeguards to be applied in order to ensure meaningful implementation of the Treaty's provisions.

123. The lack of progress in the effective implementation of article VI of the Treaty was a worrying trend. Movement away from a realistic path to disarmament could increase the risk, in the medium to long term, of a new arms race with far-reaching humanitarian consequences. It was important to recall that the commitments set out in the package of decisions adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference had been secured as a result of an agreement by States parties to extend the Treaty regime without prejudice to their disarmament obligations. As the international community continued to address the dichotomy between the lack of progress in disarmament and increasing efforts to achieve non-proliferation, all States parties that were able to do so should demonstrate their clear commitment to disarmament by increasing their support for and investment in disarmament training and education provided by the United Nations and other organizations. Such programmes would help developing countries in particular to harness the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, while contributing to international peace and security measures. That would also enable networking and coordination among States and the strengthening of understanding and cooperation in other important areas such as nuclear security.

124. The right of all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to receive effective, universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory, irrevocable and legally binding security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons could not be emphasized enough. Recalling the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion of July 1996 on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, he said that, given the scale of death and destruction that could arise from the use of nuclear weapons, it was the collective call of humanity, as reflected in the Advisory Opinion, for States to support deliberations and initiatives on developing mechanisms to prevent such catastrophes in the future.

125. The role of IAEA in the advancement of nuclear technology for sustainable development and activities related to peaceful uses in countries that were States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty — as the main channel for such cooperation — was highly appreciated. The application of the Agency's selection criteria and guidelines for transferring technology and know-how through bilateral cooperation projects must continue in a transparent and objective manner. A nuclear security infrastructure linking the nuclear safety regime and peaceful uses framework at the national level was pivotal to an environment that left no room for vulnerabilities to be exploited by persons or groups with malicious intent. Civil society and the media also had a vital role to play in preventing threats to nuclear security and any malicious use.

126. He encouraged States parties at the current session to develop guidelines that would facilitate the achievement of a timely and pragmatic action plan and final document at the 2020 Review Conference. Building a better and secure future was a shared goal that States could not ignore without disastrous consequences.

127. **Mr. Yoseph** (Ethiopia) said that humanity continued to be threatened by the existence of nuclear weapons. That threat, coupled with the fact that multilateral negotiations had so far failed to lead to consensus between States parties, had made the task of pursuing a world free of nuclear weapons all the more difficult. The failure of the 2015 Review Conference to reach consensus on a final document and the years of delay in agreeing on a work plan for substantive discussions by the Conference on Disarmament were testimony to the need for strong political will, firm resolve and commitment in order to achieve the definitive elimination of nuclear weapons, thereby ensuring sustainable global peace and security. The current session was therefore another opportunity that the international community must seize to move the process forward.

128. As a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Ethiopia unconditionally supported the Treaty's core principles, and had endorsed all General Assembly resolutions on nuclear disarmament. Ethiopia had also translated its commitment into action by engaging in the inception, development and realization of the Treaty of

Pelindaba, which had established an African nuclear-weapon-free zone under the auspices of the African Union. Together with 121 other countries, Ethiopia had also voted in favour of the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It would continue its engagement and support all efforts leading to a world free of nuclear weapons.

129. In view of the fact that the immense and uncontrollable destructive capability and indiscriminate nature of nuclear weapons entailed unacceptable humanitarian consequences, such weapons must never be used again. The only way that that could be guaranteed was through their total elimination. All nuclear-weapon States should provide non-nuclear-weapon States with universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Ethiopia supported the establishment and maintenance of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in the Middle East.

130. Developing countries should advance their use of nuclear energy to support their socioeconomic development under IAEA safeguards. In order to assist developing countries in achieving their development objectives, it was important to strengthen mechanisms for providing support in the area of human resource development and to provide the technology needed to generate nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

131. In conclusion, he called on all States parties to work towards achieving a productive outcome to the 2020 Review Conference on the basis of trust and mutual understanding, in order to create a world free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

132. **Mr. Pung** (Estonia) said that the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was the cornerstone of global efforts to pursue nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, played a crucial role in international security, paving the way for achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons in which the security interests of all countries were addressed.

133. Estonia was committed to working to achieve tangible progress under the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference in accordance with a progressive approach to be pursued in a pragmatic and responsible way. To that end, it supported the 2016 General Assembly resolutions on a fissile material cut-off treaty and nuclear disarmament verification. His country was proud to participate in the work of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group, and hoped that the process would bring States one step closer to official negotiations on that treaty. It also welcomed the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. The only way to eliminate nuclear weapons was through effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament.

134. The Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and Estonia acknowledged the progress made in strengthening the verification regime. The universalization and entry into force of that Treaty were key priorities. His country therefore urged States, particularly those whose accession was required for the Treaty to enter into force, to sign and ratify it without further delay.

135. The nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remained a threat to global peace and security. The international community must stand united and maintain pressure on that country until it suspended its unlawful programmes and returned to compliance in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. Ethiopia welcomed the latest encouraging developments in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and urged that country to sign and ratify the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without delay. Meanwhile, the continued non-compliance by the Syrian Arab Republic with its safeguards agreement was regrettable. Ethiopia urged that country to resolve all outstanding issues in full cooperation with IAEA. It also condemned in the strongest possible terms the repeated use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. The international community must end impunity for such war crimes. Estonia remained committed to supporting the joint comprehensive plan of action and to its full implementation, as verified by IAEA. The plan was a multilateral, successful endeavour, concluded in full conformity with the principles of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

136. Recalling that the Treaty's three pillars stood for peace, security and trust, he said that the strategic decision taken 20 years previously by the Government of Ukraine to join the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State was undoubtedly the right one. It was regrettable that the Russian Federation had clearly violated the Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Budapest Memorandum) through its illegal annexation of Crimea. Estonia called on the Russian Federation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine under that Memorandum.

137. Full compliance with the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty) was crucial. He therefore urged the Russian Federation to address concerns regarding its compliance in a substantial and transparent way and to remain actively engaged in dialogue with the United States. It also encouraged both countries to extend the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms and to pursue discussions on confidence-building measures and the further reduction of their arsenals.

138. At the Preparatory Committee's next session, States parties should reflect on practical progress on many aspects of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, including the development of nuclear disarmament verification capabilities, increased transparency measures, the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty and the prompt entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Focusing on common goals and engaging constructively would help States parties to strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime.

139. **Mr. Karklins** (Latvia) said that the Non-Proliferation Treaty remained the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime and a major achievement in international security. States should therefore be responsible for upholding and preserving the Treaty as a key multilateral instrument, promoting its universalization and strengthening its implementation. Latvia was strongly committed to the Treaty's full implementation and welcomed the progress made under its three mutually reinforcing pillars. States must preserve that progress and move forward with all the obligations and commitments made under the Treaty.

140. The global community was faced with numerous emerging security challenges that should be addressed multilaterally. At the current juncture, a unified approach to proliferation and the associated security threats, involving both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, was more necessary than ever.

141. Latvia strongly supported efforts to achieve a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and welcomed that country's decision to suspend its nuclear and ballistic missile tests. It was important to pursue efforts to identify a lasting solution to achieve regional and global peace and stability. That would require full compliance by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with the Treaty and other international obligations, including its complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization.

142. In recent years, international efforts in the area of non-proliferation had produced tangible results, including the joint comprehensive plan of action. It was crucial that all parties should maintain a constructive and balanced approach to the plan's full implementation.

143. The "building blocks" outlined in the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference were more relevant than ever, and States should continue to pursue their full, step-by-step implementation. States parties must revisit and act on their disarmament and non-proliferation commitments, and ensure that their support for the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty translated into action, having broadly reaffirmed that support at the 2010 Review Conference. The immediate commencement of negotiations on the treaty in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament was of the utmost importance. In that regard, Latvia supported the work of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group.

144. The Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was of crucial importance to Latvia, and its entry into force and universalization remained a key priority. That Treaty was an indispensable tool in States' efforts to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation. He called on all States that had not yet signed and ratified the Treaty, particularly the Annex 2 States, to do so.

145. A comprehensive verification regime that would eventually lead to a world without nuclear weapons had yet to be designed. The International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification was one of the few examples of a substantial contribution to that end.

146. He stressed the importance of IAEA in ensuring the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty's third pillar. The Agency's safeguards system also played an essential role in the implementation of the non-proliferation obligations established by the Treaty. The assistance provided by IAEA to its member States in ensuring the highest levels of safety and security for the benefit of all States should be underlined.

147. It was crucial that disarmament and non-proliferation commitments under existing treaties were honoured. In that regard, preservation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty was vital for international peace, security and stability. The Russian Federation should address concerns regarding its compliance in a substantial and transparent way and

actively engage in a constructive dialogue with the United States. In addition, Latvia remained deeply concerned by continued violations of the core provisions of the Budapest Memorandum. Such actions significantly eroded trust and undermined nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

148. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his country's full support for and commitment to all instruments and initiatives leading to a safer world and undiminished security for all, and its commitment to contributing to a rules-based international order, including through its chairmanship of the Nuclear Suppliers Group for the period 2018–2019.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

149. **Mr. Najafi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that he categorically rejected the baseless accusation by the representative of France concerning his country's missile programme, an issue that was related neither to the Non-Proliferation Treaty nor to the mandate of the current session. He called on France to explain why it had failed to implement its obligations under article VI of the Treaty and the disarmament commitments it had made at the 2000 and 2010 review conferences. His country had not forgotten the support provided by France to Saddam Hussein's army when that army had attacked Iranian and Iraqi civilians with chemical weapons.

150. **Mr. Yermakov** (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Federation rejected the completely unsubstantiated accusation that it had failed to comply with the Budapest Memorandum. In the Memorandum, the depositary States had provided Ukraine with security assurances. However, there was no mention in that document of what would happen if the United States and countries of the European Union staged a coup d'état in Ukraine, without the dissolution of the State as a whole. After ousting the legitimate President of Ukraine and guaranteeing a smooth transition of power, to which the President had agreed, those very same countries had staged a coup d'état in the country. The Russian Federation had never violated the territorial integrity of Ukraine, which was and had always been a good neighbour and part of the Russian-speaking world. No State could be more concerned about the current situation in Ukraine than the Russian Federation.

151. With regard to Crimea, the peninsula's inhabitants had conclusively decided their fate, 95 per cent of the population having voted to leave a fascist Ukraine which prohibited them from speaking their native language, banned their political party and stamped out dissidents, and to return to the Russian Federation. That question had been definitively resolved and should not be brought up at the current session, as there were more pressing tasks to attend to.

152. He expressed his frustration that the issue of the Salisbury incident had been raised at the current session, despite his appeals for issues unrelated to the Non-Proliferation Treaty to be kept out of the discussions. The Russian Federation had no knowledge of the precise events surrounding the incident as it had had no access to the two Russian citizens involved and the United Kingdom had been concealing all related information. Against that backdrop, his country was being faced with the absurd allegation that it had used chemical weapons.

153. The United Kingdom, rather than reaching out to the Russian Federation through the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, had simply requested inspectors from the Organisation to be deployed to the country, those inspectors having then confirmed the country's suspicions without even conducting an investigation or presenting any data.

154. The absurd version of events that his country had used chemical weapons in Salisbury would never stand up to scrutiny. He called on the States present not to be influenced by such ridiculous allegations and to focus on the work of the Preparatory Committee.

155. **Mr. Wood** (United States of America), responding to the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, said that that country was in no position to accuse others of failing to comply with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, having been found non-compliant by the IAEA Board of Governors with its comprehensive safeguards agreement, which in turn constituted a violation of article III of the Treaty. Moreover, that country's covert nuclear weapons programme violated article II of the Treaty. Furthermore, the destabilizing activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Middle East region were one of the reasons for which it was necessary to discuss conditions for further progress. The country also supported Hamas, Hizbollah, and the Houthi rebels in Yemen, and conducted ballistic missile activities in breach of United Nations resolutions.

156. With respect to the failure to establish a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, the key problem was the refusal by some States in the region, primarily the Islamic Republic of Iran, to engage in direct talks with Israel. As his country had stated on numerous occasions, it was only through direct and inclusive dialogue that such a zone could be established. However, Iranian support for the Syrian Arab Republic and its use of chemical weapons further called into

[illegible] establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

157. The United States would never hesitate to condemn the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic or any other country, even in the context of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The repeated undermining of that fundamental international norm was a major threat to the international security environment, which States were working to improve.

158. In respect of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, it was the Russian Federation rather than the United States that was violating the Treaty. Years after denying that it possessed a ground-launch cruise missile, in December 2017 the Russian Federation had finally acknowledged that it did indeed possess such a missile. However, it now claimed that the missile was unable to fly in the range prohibited by the Treaty. The United States had for years called for the Russian Federation to return to compliance with its Treaty obligations, and it once again renewed that call.

159. The Russian Federation was continuing its efforts to redraw the boundaries within Europe. It was clear that the Russian narrative on Ukraine did not withstand scrutiny. He called on the Russian Federation to save the Preparatory Committee 's valuable time by sparing it from its revisionist views of historical events.

160. **Mr. Rowland** (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had been clear about its reasons for raising the issues of Salisbury and chemical weapons at the previous meeting. The continued use of chemical weapons undermined the non-proliferation regime, of which the Non-Proliferation Treaty was the cornerstone, and also undermined trust, including through the continued denial by the Syrian regime and others of the use of chemical weapons, as well as diminishing prospects for progress on such issues as a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

161. With regard to the chemical attack in Salisbury, while it was impossible to know the real reason for such a reckless attack that had endangered innocent lives, it was difficult not to conclude that it had been a deliberate attempt to humiliate the United Kingdom and provoke it into rash action. However, there would be no rash action, but a carefully considered reaction to the attempt by the Russian Federation to undermine the international rules-based system, of which the expulsion of Russian diplomats from his country was just the first step. Furthermore, the United Kingdom had not been humiliated. In times of adversity, his country's values came to the fore. The United Kingdom was united and resolute on the issue, and, as had become increasingly evident in recent weeks, stood united among many States that had suffered the hostile actions of the Russian Federation, States that felt the threat posed by that country more keenly every day, and States that deplored the undermining by the Russian Federation of the collective security system on which they all depended. The United Kingdom was therefore humbled that its actions had catalysed such a strong shared response from many States, who, by expulsing Russian officials from their territory, had sent a clear signal to the Russian Federation that they would not tolerate its actions in flagrant violation of international law, nor its attempts to undermine common values. The Russian Federation must pay heed to that response.

162. **Mr. Al Ashkar** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the statements by the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom were a continuation of the systematic campaign carried out by those countries to demonize his own within the United Nations since 2011. The completely baseless allegations were a mere pretext for launching military campaigns against a sovereign country, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The campaign had precluded any honest and credible investigation to substantiate such allegations. The objective was to exert pressure on States to accept the version of events peddled by the United States and the United Kingdom. That had been demonstrated by the events in Khan Shaykhun the previous year, when the United States and its allies had stirred up a media campaign and had launched a military attack on a military base in Syria before an honest and objective investigation could be conducted. The same thing was happening once more. The United States had spread lies about the alleged use of chemical weapons in Douma and had launched an attack on Syrian territory in cooperation with its partners. That had occurred one day prior to the arrival of a fact-finding mission from the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which had been invited by his country to carry out an objective and impartial investigation of the events.

163. He questioned why the three countries that had launched that attack had done so before they knew the results of the investigation, and wished to know the legal basis on which those countries could make such allegations without taking into account the Charter of the United Nations, international law and relevant treaties, particularly as they repeatedly highlighted their respect for their international commitments. He questioned the ethical and legal bases that allowed those countries to make such allegations without respecting the provisions of the relevant treaties and international law.

164. On the subject of maintaining the non-proliferation regime, he said that the United States and the United Kingdom had violated the 1995 resolution and, accordingly, their legal commitments. They had also prevented the 2015 Review Conference from adopting a final document in order to protect Israel. During the current session, many States had repeated that the main threat to peace and stability in the Middle East was the fact that Israel was the only country in the region that possessed arsenals of weapons of mass destruction and refused to accede to all relevant treaties. Israel also refused the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. All delegations knew that it was the refusal by that country to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty that was preventing its universalization. In addition, the country's refusal to place its facilities under a comprehensive safeguards agreement threatened the non-proliferation regime at the international level.

165. **Mr. Yermakov** (Russian Federation) said that his country had believed that it was surrounded by reasonable and understanding partners with whom it could hold a normal and mutually respectful discussion, and had always held both United Kingdom and United States diplomats in high esteem, but was sometimes dismayed at what was said by those delegations at international forums.

166. The Russian Federation was incredulous about the allegations that it had been involved in the chemical attack in Salisbury. Rather, it was more likely to be the work of the intelligence agencies of the United Kingdom itself. Meanwhile, the United States and the United Kingdom were using their leverage to silence their NATO partners and force them to display solidarity. However, that could not continue indefinitely.

167. The United Kingdom had failed to provide any data or proof regarding the attack in Salisbury. Any reasonable person would understand that the Russian Federation would have no reason to attack two of its own citizens on British soil. The Russian Federation felt shame on the behalf of the administration and diplomats of the United Kingdom, and of the representatives of the allies of the United Kingdom and the United States when they parroted such absurdities. As had been the case with regard to weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, the truth would eventually be revealed.

168. Regarding the absurd accusations against the Syrian Arab Republic, it would be possible for members of the Russian military who were at the site of the attack to verify the events that had occurred. However, the States that had carried out the missile attacks on the Syrian Arab Republic were unwilling for the truth to be revealed.

169. **Mr. Wood** (United States of America) said that the repeated dishonest claims made by the Syrian Arab Republic about its innocence regarding the use of chemical weapons was shameful. He reiterated that the United States would not cease its condemnation of the country's actions in all relevant forums until there was accountability. He also expressed astonishment at the lengths the Russian Federation would go to in order to defend the crimes committed by the regime in Damascus.

170. **Mr. Rowland** (United Kingdom) said that he would not be drawn into the rhetoric used by the representative of the Russian Federation. He had made his position very clear and the Russian Federation should take heed of the message conveyed by so many States.

171. Up to 75 people, including children, had been killed in a despicable and barbaric attack in Douma on 7 April 2018. The World Health Organization had reported that 500 patients seen by its partners in the country had had symptoms consistent with chemical weapons exposure, and that had been borne out by first-hand accounts of non-governmental organizations and aid workers. As stated by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom on 14 April, it was clear who was responsible for the atrocity. A significant body of information, including intelligence, indicated that the Syrian regime was responsible for the attack. Open source accounts alleged that a barrel bomb had been used to deliver the chemicals, and a regime helicopter had been seen above Douma on the evening of the attack. The opposition did not operate helicopters or use barrel bombs. Reliable intelligence indicated that Syrian military officials had coordinated what appeared to be the use of chlorine gas. No other group could have carried out the attack.

172. **Mr. Al Ashkar** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the accusations by the United States were not credible as they were based on unilateral conclusions, rather than impartial investigations or evidence. Furthermore, bearing in mind that the United States had never been held to account for its nuclear attacks on Japan, which had killed hundreds of thousands of people, and for its chemical attacks in Viet Nam, it was in no position to call for the Syrian Arab Republic to be held to account.

173. With regard to the reference by the representative of the United Kingdom to the report by the World Health Organization, the Director General of that Organization had stated that it had not been possible to verify the allegations contained in that report. Furthermore, with

regard to the statement made by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, he pointed out the hypocrisy of such a statement by a State that had considered the use of nuclear weapons in response to the attack in Douma.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.